AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY
United States of America

April 2011

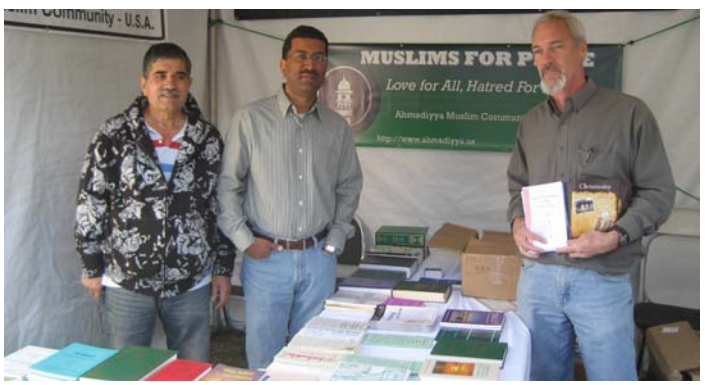
The Ahmadiyya GAZETTE USA

An informational, literary, educational, and training magazine of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA

Seeratun Nabi[saw] Edition

Tabligh event in Paterson, NJ

Tabligh event held at Tucson, AZ



An educational and spiritual monthly publication

Ahmadiyya Gazette USA

OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM, USA

April 2011

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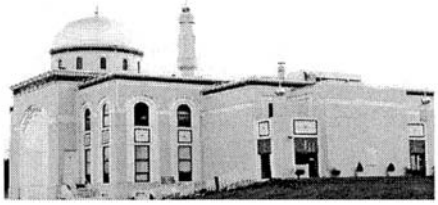
Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

saw:	sallallahu alaihi wasallam (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him)
as:	alaihissalam (Peace be upon him)
ra:	radhi allahu 'anhu (May Allah be pleased with him/her)
rh:	rahimahullahu ta'ala (May Allah shower mercy on him/her)
aba:	ayyada hullah ta'ala binasrihil aziz (May Allah strengthen him with His mighty help)
swt:	subhana wa ta'ala (Holy and Exalted)

The Ahmadiyya Gazette USA is published by the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Inc., at the local address:

Fazl-i-Umar Press
P.O. Box 226, Chauncey, OH 45719

Periodicals Postage Paid at Chauncey, Ohio
Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Ahmadiyya Gazette
P.O. Box 226, Chauncey, OH 45719-0226



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Al-Qur'an

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ اَبَآ اَحَدٍ مِّنْ رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلٰكِنْ
رَّسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيّٖنَ ط وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ
شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمًا ۝

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but *he is* the Messenger of Allāh and the Seal of the Prophets; and Allāh has full knowledge of all things. (33:41)

Commentary:

Khātam is derived from *Khatama* which means, he sealed, stamped, impressed or imprinted the thing. This is the primary signification of this word. The secondary meaning is he reached the end of the thing; or covered the thing; or protected what is in a writing by marking or stamping a piece of clay upon it, or by means of a seal of any kind. *Khātam* means, a signet ring; a seal or stamp and a mark; the end or last part or portion and result or issue of a thing. The word also signifies embellishment or ornament; the best and most perfect The words *Khātim* and *Khatm* and *Khātam* are almost synonymous (Lane, Mufradāt, Fath & Zurqāni). So the expression *Khātam al-Nabiyyin* would mean, the Seal of the Prophets; the best and most perfect of the Prophets; the embellishment and ornament of the Prophets. Secondarily it means, the last of the Prophets.

At Mecca when all the Holy Prophet's male children had died in their childhood, his enemies taunted him with being *Abtar* (one who has no male issue), meaning that in the absence of male heirs to succeed him his Movement would sooner or later come to an end (Muhit). In answer to this taunt of disbelievers it was emphatically declared in *Surah Kausar* that not the Prophet but his enemies would remain issueless. After the revelation of *Surah Kausar* the idea naturally found favour with early Muslims that the Prophet would be blessed with Sons who would live to an adult age. The verse under comment removed that misconception inasmuch as it declared that the Prophet is not, never was,

nor will ever be the father of any grown-up young men (*Rijāl* meaning grown-up young men). The verse while appearing to be in conflict with *Surah Kausar* in which not the Holy Prophet but his enemies were threatened with being issueless, in reality seeks to set at rest doubts and misgivings to which this seeming contradiction gives rise. It says that the Holy Prophet is *Rasulallah*, signifying that he is the spiritual father of a whole *Ummah* and he is also *Khātam al-Nabiyyin* signifying that he is the spiritual father of all the Prophets. So when he is the spiritual father of all believers and of all Prophets, how can he be said to be *Abtar* (issueless). If the expression be taken to mean that he is the last of the Prophets and that no Prophet will come alter him, then the verse would appear to be out of tune and to possess no relevance with the context, and instead of refuting the taunt of disbelievers that the Holy Prophet was issueless, would suppot and reinforce it. Briefly, according to the meaning of the word *Khātam*, given above, the expression *Khātam al-Nabiyyin* can have four possible meanings:

(1) The Holy Prophet was the Seal of the Prophets, i.e., no Prophet can be regarded as true unless his Prophethood bean the seal of the Holy Prophet. The Prophethood of every past Prophet must be confirmed and testified to by the Holy Prophet, and also nobody can attain to Prophethood after him excepi by being his follower.

(2) The Holy Prophet was the best, the noblest and the most perfect of all the Prophets and he was also a source of embellishment for them (Zurqāni, Shara Mawahib al-Ladunniyyah).

(3) The Holy Prophet was the last of the law-bearing Prophet& This interprctation has been accepted by eminent Muslim theologians, saints and savants such as Ibn 'Arabi, Shah Walli Allah, Imām 'Ali Qāri, *Mujaddid Alf Thani*, and others. According to these great scholars and saints no Prophet can come after the Holy Prophet who could abrogate his *Millah* or who should be from outside his *Ummah* (Futuhat, Tafhimi, Maktubāt & Yawāqit wa'l Jawāhir). 'A'ishah, the talented spouse of the Holy Prophet, is reported to have said, 'Say that he (the Holy Prophet) is *Khatam al-Nabiyyin*, but do not say that there will be no Prophet after him' (Manthtlr).

(4) The Holy Prophet was the last of the Prophets only in this sense that all the qualities and attributes of Prophethood found their most perfect and complete consummation and expression in him; *Khātam* in the sense of being the last word in excellence and perfection is of common use. Moreover the Qur'an clearly speaks of the advent of Prophets after the Holy Prophet (7:3 6). The Holy Prophet himself was clear in his mind as to the continuity of Prophethood after him. He is reported to have said: 'If Ibrthla (his son) had remained alive, he would have been a Prophet' (Majah, Kitab al-Jana'iz), and, 'Abu Bakr is best of men after me, except that a Prophet should appear' (Kanz).

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Al-Hadith

عَنْ اَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: بَيْنَمَا النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِيْ مَجْلِسٍ يُحَدِّثُ الْقَوْمَ جَآءَهٗ اَعْرَابِيٌّ فَقَالَ: مَتَى السَّاعَةُ؟ فَمَضٰى رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُحَدِّثُ فَقَالَ بَعْضُ الْقَوْمِ: سَمِعَ مَا قَالَ فَكَرِهَ مَا قَالَ ، وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: بَلْ لَمْ يَسْمَعْ حَتّٰى اِذَا قَضٰى حَدِيْثَهٗ قَالَ: اَيْنَ السَّآئِلُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ؟ قَالَ: هَا اَنَا يَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ! قَالَ: اِذَا ضُيِّعَتِ الْاَمَانَةُ فَانْتَظِرِ السَّاعَةَ قَالَ كَيْفَ اِضَاعَتُهَا؟ قَالَ: اِذَا وُسِّدَ الْاَمْرُ اِلٰى غَيْرِ اَهْلِهٖ فَانْتَظِرِ السَّاعَةَ ـ

بخاري كتاب العلم باب من سئل علما و هو مشتغل في حديثه

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates: "While the Holy Prophet[saw] was sitting talking to the people a rustic came and asked, 'When will the Doomsday be?' The Holy Prophet[sa] continued his talk. Some of those present thought that the Holy Prophet[sa] had heard him but did not like the interruption and the others said he did not hear him. When the Holy Prophet[sa] finished his speech, he saidd, 'Where is the one who inquired about the Doomsday.' The man said, 'Here I am, Messenger[sa] of Allāh.' The Holy Prophet[saw] said, 'When the trust is betrayed expect the Doomsday.' The man inquired, 'How will the trust be betrayed?' The Holy Prophet[sa] answered, 'When authority is committed to those not fit to administer it, then wait for the Doomsday.' "

(Bukhari kitabul 'ilm bāb man su'ila 'ulamā' wa huwa mushtaghil fi hadithih)

SAYINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH[AS]

Exalted Status of the Holy Prophet[SA]

Manifestation of the Living God and the Light Divine

That light of high degree that was bestowed on perfect man was not in angels, was not in stars, was not in the moon, was not in the sun, was not in the oceans and the rivers, was not in rubies, emeralds, sapphires, or pearls; in short, it was not in any earthly or heavenly object. It was only in perfect man whose highest and loftiest and most perfect example was our lord and master, the Chief of the Prophets, the Chief of all living ones, Muhammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). That light was bestowed on this man and, according to their ranks, upon all those who bore the same colour to some degree. . . This dignity was found in its highest and most perfect form in our lord and master and our guide, the immaculate Prophet, the righteous one, testified to by the righteous, Muhammad, the chosen one[saw].

[Ayena-i-Kamalat-i-Islam, Roohani Khaza'in, Vol. 5, pp. 160-162]

I always wonder how high was the status of this Arab Prophet, whose name was Muhammad, thousands of blessings and peace be upon him. One cannot reach the limit of his high status and it is not given to man to estimate correctly his spiritual effectiveness. It is a pity that his rank has not been recognised, as it should have been. He was the champion who restored to the world the **Unity of God** which had disappeared from the world; he loved God in the extreme and his soul melted out of sympathy for mankind. Therefore, God, Who knew the secret of his heart, exalted him above all the Prophets and all the first ones and the last ones and bestowed upon him in his lifetime all that he desired.

He is the fountainhead of every grace and a person who claims any superiority without acknowledging his grace is not a man but is the progeny of Satan, because he has been bestowed the key to every exaltation and he has been given the treasury of every understanding. He who does not receive through him is deprived forever. I am nothing and possess nothing. I would be most ungrateful if I were not to confess that I have learnt of the true Unity of God through this Prophet. The recognition of the Living God we have achieved through this perfect Prophet and through his light. The honour of converse with God, through which we behold His countenance, has been bestowed upon me through **this great Prophet.** The ray of this sun of guidance falls like sunshine upon me and I continue illumined only so long as I am adjusted towards it.

[Haqiqatul Wahy, Roohani Khaza'in, Vol. 22, pp. 118-119]

O all ye who dwell upon the earth, and O all human souls that are in the east or in the west, I announce to you emphatically that the true reality in the earth is Islam alone, and the true God is the God Who is described in the Qur'an, and the Prophet who has everlasting spiritual life and who is seated on the throne of glory and holiness, is Muhammad, the chosen one[saw]. The proof of his spiritual life and holy

majesty is that by following him and loving him we become recipients of the Holy Spirit and are favoured with the bounty of converse with God and witness heavenly signs.

[Tiryaqul Quloob, Roohani Khaza'in, Vol. 15, p. 141]

The man who in his being and his attributes and his actions and through his spiritual and holy faculties set an example of perfection, in knowledge and action and in sincerity and steadfastness, and was called the perfect man was Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). . . The man who was most perfect as man and as Prophet, and came with full blessings, and who through a spiritual revival and resurrection manifested the first judgment in the world and revived the dead world, that blessed Prophet, the Seal of the Prophets, the leader of the righteous ones, the pride of the Prophets, was Muhammad, the chosen one[saw]. Our Lord, send down on that beloved Prophet that mercy and blessing that Thou hast not sent down on anyone since the beginning of the world. Had that grand Prophet not appeared in the world then we would have no proof of the truth of lesser Prophets like Jonah, Job, Jesus son of Mary, Malachi, John, Zechariah, etc. Though they were favourites and honoured and were beloved ones of Almighty God, they are under obligation to this Prophet that they were accepted in the world as true Prophets.

O Allah, send down Thy blessings on him and on his people and on his companions, all of them. Our last word is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

Itmamul Hujjah, Roohani Khaza'in, Vol. 8, p. 308]

When we estimate justly, then out of the whole series of Prophets, we find one of high courage and alive and greatly dear to God, the Chief of the Prophets, the pride and the crown of the Messengers, whose name is Muhammad Mustafa and Ahmad Mujtaba[saw].

By walking under his shadow for ten days one obtains that light which before him could not be obtained in a thousand years. . . We have found every light by following the immaculate Prophet and whoever follows him will also find it and he will become so accepted of God that nothing will be impossible for him. The Living God, who is hidden from people, will be his God and all false gods will be trodden under his feet. He will be blessed everywhere and Divine Power will be with him. *Peace be on him who follows the guidance.*

[Siraj Muneer, Roohani Khaza'in, Vol. 12, p. 82-83]

Now under heaven there is only one Prophet[saw] and only one Book. The Prophet is Muhammad, the chosen one[saw] who is higher and more exalted than all Prophets and is the most perfect of Messengers and is the *Khatamal Anbiya*, and the best of men by following whom we find God Almighty and all the veils of darkness are lifted and the signs of true salvation are witnessed in this very life. The Book is the Holy Qur'an, which comprises true and perfect guidance and effectiveness, through which knowledge and understanding of the Divine are obtained and the heart is purified of human weaknesses; and being delivered from ignorance, heedlessness and doubts, a person arrives at the stage of complete certainty.

[Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya, Roohani Khaza'in, Vol. 1, p. 557-558, sub-footnote 3]

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Synopsis of Friday Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V[aba], on January 28, 2011 at Baitul Futuh Mosque, Morden, UK

Shermeen Butt

Hazoor[aba] gave a discourse on God's love for the Holy Prophet[saw] and His retribution towards his enemies in the Friday Sermon today. Hazoor[aba] quoted a *Hadith e Qudsi* in which God states regarding the Holy Prophet[saw]: 'If I had not created you I would not have created the world.' Many Muslims object over the authenticity of this *Hadith*. However, the true and ardent devotee of the Prophet[saw] has explained to us that this *Hadith* is genuine and it illustrates the Prophet's[saw] lofty and matchless station. He was the most excellent among all the Prophets and his advent took place for all time and God's love can be found by following him. He was given that seal of prophethood which attests all the previous Prophets. He was indeed that Seal of all the Prophets in that one of his followers has been granted status of prophethood, i.e. in accordance with his own prophecy; the Mahdi was given the status of prophethood. His closeness to God is thus described in the Holy Qur'an: 'Then he drew nearer *to God*; then he came down *to mankind*,' (53:9).

Explaining the above Qur'anic verse, the Promised Messiah[as] said that the Prophet's[saw] lofty status had two stations; one went upwards and the other came downwards. His rise was towards God, taking him closer, to the extent of a union. When he partook of God's blessings, he acquired grace and benevolence which he dispensed to mankind, as the Qur'an states: 'And We have sent thee not but as a mercy for all peoples.' (21:108). By attaining extreme closeness to God, he was given the station for the salvation of people and intercession on their behalf and given the title of 'Mercy of all the worlds' and God declared love for him is love for God. All this proves that the heavens were created out of God's love for him. It is our good fortune that by coming in the *Bai'at* of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) we have recognized the rightful status of the Holy Prophet[saw]. Regarding the aforementioned *Hadith*, the Promised Messiah[as] wrote what is the difficulty in accepting it? The Qur'an states that whatever is in the earth is for man. Could it not be possible then that from among His special people there is someone for whom the heavens were created? The Promised Messiah[as] said that the incident of 'spilt moon' that took place during the life of the Holy Prophet[saw] was a miracle, he said it may have been an eclipse of some kind. Indeed, in accordance with the prophecy of the Holy Prophet[saw] eclipses took place during the time of his Mahdi as well which are recorded events.

Hazoor[aba] said his objective in citing all this is to explain the lofty status of the Holy Prophet[saw]. His life was full of miracles which tell us about his lofty status and God's love for him, yet once when the pagans demanded that he ascended the heavens in front of them and brought down a Book, God stated: '... Say, 'Holy is my Lord! I am not but a man *sent as a* Messenger' (17:94). Although he was the perfect man and most excellent among others but he was a mortal man. Just as people bore enmity with earlier Prophets, they did with him. He had come for all the peoples of the world, enmity towards him existed then and it exists today and will continue to exist. Other Prophets were derided and so was he, indeed continues to derided. Islam had spread outside Arabia in his lifetime, later it spread all over the world and continues to spread today. A time will come when the majority of world will be under the banner of Islam and the Holy Prophet[saw]. God gave him the following responsibility: 'O Messenger! convey *to the people* what has been

revealed to thee from thy Lord; and if thou do it not, thou hast not conveyed His Message *at all*. And Allah will protect thee from men. Surely, Allah guides not the disbelieving people. (5:68)

The Holy Prophet[saw] took this message to everyone with love, compassion, patience and prayers. The outsiders say Islam was spread by force, even a few self-styled Muslim scholars maintain this. After the migration to Medina and the battle of Badr, various battles took place until the treaty of Hudaibia. Among these battles, in the battle of Ahzab 3000 Muslims were martyred whereas at the time of treaty of Hudaibia a procession of 1500 people had gone with the Prophet$_{saw}$. However, from the time of treaty of Hudaibia to the victory of Mecca, which took place after two and three quarters years of the treaty, the procession that entered Mecca with the Prophet[saw] was of 10,000 people. This proves that in the peaceful time of over two years the spread of Islam was greater. There are many incidents of the Prophet's benevolence and forgiveness which Hazoor[aba] has cited. His stance was such because God had commanded him. God told him that he would be treated in the same manner as the earlier Prophets had been treated by their people but he was to be forgiving, steadfast and determined unless someone imposed war on him. The Qur'an thus explained: 'So bear with patience what they say, and glorify thy Lord with *His* praise, before the rising of the sun and before *its* setting; (50:40). God assured the Prophet[saw] to face the inevitable derision and mocking with steadfastness for the Qur'an is replete with prophecies that God and His Messenger will triumph ultimately and whosoever fears God will take heed and make his or her life in this world and the Hereafter better.

God enjoined the Prophet[saw]:

'Have patience, then, as had the Messengers of strong determination; and be in no haste about them. On the day when they see that with which they are threatened, it will appear to them as though they had not tarried save for an hour of a day. *This warning* has been conveyed; and none but the disobedient people shall be destroyed.' (46:36).

Hazoor[aba] explained that patience and steadfastness during adversity and difficult times is what brings triumph and that success has its appointed time. As the era of the Holy Prophet[saw] is till the end of time, then according to Divine promise, chastisement of his enemies in every age will become a sign. Indeed, his detractors committed all manner of enmity during his life time, as the Qur'an states:

'And they said, 'O thou to whom this Exhortation has been sent down, thou art surely a madman.'(15:7).

Hazoor[aba] said this is blatant abuse. The entire population of Mecca extended terrible treatment to the Prophet[saw] but after he was victorious and entered Mecca, he treated everyone with love. Just as Hazoor[aba] explained in last Friday Sermon, these were not just people who gave verbal abuse, indeed they exceeded limits of cruelty.

The Qur'an states:

'And those who disbelieve say, 'It is naught but a lie which he has forged, and other people have helped him with it.' Indeed, they have brought forth an injustice and an untruth.' (25:5).

Hazoor[aba] said this verse carries profound subject, but Hazoor[aba] would only mention here that the people who called the Prophet[saw] a liar after his claim to prophethood were the same who were convinced of his honesty beforehand. Regarding their enmity, the Qur'an also states:

'...And the wrongdoers say, 'You follow none but a man bewitched.' (25:9) and 'And they wonder

that a Warner has come to them from among themselves; and the disbelievers say, 'This is a magician, a great liar.' (38:5). Although they called him all manner of names and derided him, God commanded him to be steadfast: '...you shall surely hear many hurtful things from those who were given the Book before you and from those who set up equals *to God.* But if you show fortitude and act righteously, that indeed is *a matter* of strong determination.' (3:187).

Hazoor[aba] said what could be more hurtful for a believer who loves his or her master more than life to hear such discourtesy towards him, but God has enjoined patience and steadfastness. Hazoor[aba] said in last Friday Sermon Hazoor[aba] had given the example of the Promised Messiah[as] in this instance. For this, *taqwa* is conditional. If we abide by *taqwa* and turn to God, the Lord of retribution, we will witness the bad ending of enemies. However, our own *taqwa* is a condition for this.

God states in *Surah Al Haqqah*:

'That it is surely the word *brought* by a noble Messenger; And it is not the word of a poet; little is it that you believe! Nor is it the word of a soothsayer; little is it that you heed! *It is* a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.' (69:41-44)

and thus responds to the detractors of the Holy Prophet[saw]. Although God enjoins steadfastness to believers, He states:

'We will, surely, suffice thee against those who mock:' (15:96),

He Himself is retributive towards the wrongdoers. He also states:

'And as for those who are disobedient, their abode will be the Fire. Every time they desire to come forth therefrom, they will be turned back into it, and it will be said to them, 'Taste the punishment of the Fire which you used to deny, And most surely, we will make them taste of the lesser punishment before the greater punishment, so that they may return to *Us with repentance.* And who does greater wrong than he who is reminded of the Signs of his Lord and then turns away from them? We will surely punish the guilty.' (32:21-23).

If the enemy does not fear God's warnings, as He manifests His Power at times to reform people, then God definitely punishes, but He also states that He alone has control over this matter.

God stated to the Holy Prophet[saw]:

'And bear patiently all that they say; and part with them in a decent manner. And leave Me alone with those who reject *the truth,* possessors of ease and plenty; and give them a little respite. Surely, with Us are *heavy* fetters and *raging* fire. And food that chokes, and a painful punishment —'(73:11-14).

God has kept the matter to display cautionary signs to Himself and has enjoined Prophets and their followers to be patient and keep themselves detached from such people. Regarding His chastisement, God states:

'Hast thou seen him who forbids. A servant *of Ours* when he prays. *Beware* if he were to be on the right. Or had admonished righteousness? Again have considered if he falsified the truth *instead* and turned away? Does he not realize that Allah sees? Nay if he desist not, We will certainly drag him by the forelock, A forelock false, sinful. Then let him call his companions. We too will call *Our angels of punishment who will thrust him into Hell.*' (96:10-19).

God also states in the Qur'an:

'There are some among the Jews who pervert words from their *proper* places. And they say, 'We hear and we disobey,' and 'hear *thou* without being heard,' and '*Ra'ina,*' screening with their tongues *what is in their minds* and *seeking* to injure the Faith. And if they had said, 'We hear and we obey,' and 'hear *thou,*' and '*Unzurna,*' it would have been better for them and more upright. But Allah has cursed them for their disbelief; so they believe but little.' (4:47).

Hazoor[aba] explained this is the treatment for those who insult God's Prophets. The Jews of the time of the Holy Prophet[saw] would say if the God of Islam was a True God why did He not punish their hostile scheming.

In reply, God stated:

'Hast thou not seen those who were forbidden *to hold* secret counsels and again return to what they were forbidden, and confer secretly for sin and transgression and disobedience to the Messenger? And when they come to thee, they greet thee with *a greeting with* which Allah has not greeted thee; but among themselves they say, 'Why does not Allah punish us for what we say?' Sufficient for them is Hell, wherein they will burn; and a most evil destination it is!' (58:9).

As Hazoor[aba] explained two Fridays ago, the Jews of the time would say *'Assamalaik'* (may you be destroyed) rather than *Assalamoalaik* and when the Companions wanted to take revenge, the Prophet[saw] always told them God had taken the matter from their hands.

As mentioned by Hazoor[aba], the Holy Prophet[saw] was the most beloved of God and his prophethood is to last till the Day of Judgment, yet enemies opposed him as they did all other Prophets. At every juncture God enjoined him to be steadfast and prayerful like the earlier resolute Prophets and enjoined the same to his followers, assuring that He Himself would take retribution. However, permission was given to contend with the enemy if he attacked and destroyed peace. If this permission is not given, the detractors would destroy peace for adherents of all religions. One example of God's retribution of affront to the Holy Prophet[saw] is stated in the Qur'an as: 'Perished be the two hands of Abu Lahab, and so perish he' (111:2).

Abu Lahab's stance towards the Prophet[saw] was most reprehensible and he met a terrible ending when wolves tore his body apart. The Divine promises made to the Holy Prophet[saw], who is the most beloved of God, will continue to be fulfilled till the Day of Judgment. In every era, enemies of Islam have been meeting their bad ending and will continue to meet them. May God always show us manifestations of the Prophet's lofty station and God's love for him. May we put teachings of the Qur'an in practice and be those believers who the Holy Prophet[saw] expected his *Ummah* to be.

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HADITH

Hadhrat Jabir[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "The similitude of me and you is like a person who kindles a fire, and moths and the like insects rush to fall into it and he strives to protect them from the fire. Likewise, I hold you from the back to save you from the fire of Hell while you struggle to slip out of my hands."

(Muslim Kitabul Fada'il bab shafqata Sallallahu 'alaihi wassalam 'ala- ummatihi)

THE FAREWELL ADDRESS OF THE HOLY PROPHET[saw] AT THE OCCASION OF THE LAST PILGRIMAGE (HAJJATUL WIDA')

In the ninth year of the Hijrah, the Holy Prophet[saw] went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. This was the first *Hajj* performed by the Holy Prophet[saw] during his prophethood. Thus this event was of great significance as the Holy Prophet[saw] himself was practically showing the proper way of performing various rites of the *Hajj*. God Almighty states in the Holy Qur'an about the *Hajj*:

وَاَذِّنْ فِى النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَاْتُوْكَ رِجَالًا وَّ عَلٰى
كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَّاْتِيْنَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيْقٍ ۙ لِّيَشْهَدُوْا
مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللّٰهِ فِىْٓ اَيَّامٍ
مَّعْلُوْمٰتٍ عَلٰى مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَهِيْمَةِ الْاَنْعَامِ ۚ
فَكُلُوْا مِنْهَا وَ اَطْعِمُوا الْبَآئِسَ الْفَقِيْرَ ۝ ثُمَّ
لْيَقْضُوْا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلْيُوْفُوْا نُذُوْرَهُمْ وَلْيَطَّوَّفُوْا
بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيْقِ ۝

And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come to you on foot, and on every lean camel, coming by every distant track. That they may witness its benefits for them and may mention the name of Allah, during the appointed days, over the quadrupeds of the class of cattle that He has provided for them. Then eat you thereof and feed the distressed, the needy. Then let them accomplish the task of cleansing themselves, and fulfill their vows and go around the Ancient House. (22:28-30)

On the day of the pilgrimage, the Holy Prophet[saw] received the revelation containing the famed verse of the Holy Qur'an:

اَلْيَوْمَ اَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِيْنَكُمْ وَ اَتْمَمْتُ
عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِىْ وَ رَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْاِسْلَامَ دِيْنًا ؕ

This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favor upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion. (5:4)

This verse said in effect that the message which the Holy Prophet[saw] had brought from God and which by word and deed he had been expounding all these years, had been completed. Every part of this

message was a blessing. The Message now completed, embodied the highest blessings which man could receive from God. The Message is epitomized in the name 'Al-Islam", which means submission. Submission was to be the religion of Muslims, the religion of mankind.

The Holy Prophet[saw] recited this verse in the valley of Muzdalifah, where the pilgrims had assembled. Returning from Muzdalifah, the Holy Prophet[saw] stopped at Mina. It was the eleventh day of the month of *Dhul Hijjah*. The Holy Prophet[saw] while sitting on his camel, facing a large gathering of Muslims and delivered an address in loud voice, famed in history as the farewell address of the Holy Prophet[saw] Rabi'ah ibn Umayyah ibn Khalaf repeated the sermon after him sentence by sentence.

The Farewell Address

In the course of the address the Holy Prophet[saw] said:

"O men, lend me an attentive ear. For I know not whether I will stand before you again in this valley and address you as I address you now. Your lives and your possessions have been made immune by God to attacks by one another until the Day of Judgment. God has appointed for every one a share in the inheritance. No 'Will' shall now be admitted which is prejudicial to the interests of a rightful heir. A child born in any house will be regarded as the child of the father in that house. Whoever contests the parentage of this child will be liable to punishment under the Law of Islam. Anyone who attributes his birth to some one else's father, or falsely claims someone to be his master, God, His angels and the whole of mankind will curse him.

O men, you have some rights against your wives, but your wives also have some rights against you. Your right against them is that they should live chaste lives, and not adopt ways which may bring disgrace to the husband in the sight of his people. If your wives do not live up to this, then you have the right to punish them. You can punish them after due inquiry has been made by a competent authority, and your right to punish has been established. Even so, punishment in such a case must not be severe. But if your wives do not do such things, and their behavior is not such as would bring disgrace to their husbands, then your duty is to provide for them food and garments and shelter, according to your own standard of living.

Remember you must always treat your wives well. God has charged you with the duty of looking after them. A woman is weak and cannot protect her own rights. When you married, God appointed you the trustees of those rights. You brought your wives to your homes under the Law of God. You must not, therefore, insult the trust which God has placed in your hands.

O men, you still have in your possession some prisoners of war. I advise you, therefore, to feed them and to clothe them in the same way and style as you feed and clothe yourselves. If they do anything wrong which you are unable to forgive, then pass them on to someone else. They are part of God's creation. To give them pain or trouble can never be right.

O men, what I say to you, you must hear and remember. All Muslims are as brethren to one another. All of you are equal. All men, whatever nation or tribe they may belong to, and whatever station in life they may hold, are equal.

While he was saying this the Prophet[saw] raised his hands and joined the fingers of the one hand with the fingers of other and then said:

Even as fingers of the two hands are equal, so are human beings equal to one another. No one has any right, any superiority to claim over another. You are as brothers.

Proceeding, the Holy Prophet[saw] said:

Do you know what month this is? What territory we are in? What day of the year it is today?

The Muslims said in reply, they knew it was the sacred month, the sacred land and the day of the *Hajj.*

Then the Holy Prophet[saw] said:

Even as this month is sacred, this land inviolate, and this day holy, so has God made the lives, property and the honor of every man sacred. To take any man's life or his property, or attack his honor, is as unjust and wrong as to violate the sacredness of this day, this month, and this territory. What I command you today is not meant only for today. It is meant for all times. You are expected to remember it and to act upon it until you leave this world and go to the next to meet your Maker.

In conclusion he said:

What I have said to you, you should communicate to the ends of the earth. Perhaps those who have not heard me may benefit by it more than those who have heard.

(Sihah Sitta, Tabari, Hisham and Khamis)

The Holy Prophet's[saw] address is an epitome of the entire teaching and spirit of Islam. It shows how deep was the Holy Prophet's[saw] concern for the welfare of man and the peace of the world; also how deep was his regard for the rights of women and other weak creatures. The Holy Prophet[saw] knew his end was near. He had hints from God about his death.

(Life of Mohammad[saw], Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, p. 160-162)

Hadhrat Ibn 'Abbas[ra] relates that at the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "O People! What day of the year is today? They replied: 'It is the venerable day of '*Arfah.*' Then he asked, 'Do you know what city it is?' They replied, 'It is the sacred city of Mecca.' Then he asked, 'What month is this?' They replied, 'It is the sacred month of *Dhulhijjah.*' Then the Holy Prophet[saw] said, 'Listen! Your bounties, your lives and your honors are as sacred, and their disrespect is as unlawful for you, as this day, this city and this month are revered and sacred for you and as their disrespect is unlawful for you.' He[saw] repeated this several times. Then he raised his head up towards the sky and said: 'O Allah! Did I convey Your Message?' He[saw] repeated the words:

هَلْ بَلَّغْتُ

(*hal ballaghtu*) many times. Hadhrat Ibn 'Abbas[ra] says, in fact it was a clear testimony given by the Holy Prophet[saw] to Allah the Exalted that he has conveyed and made the people understand (the message) in the best possible way. Then the Holy Prophet[saw] (while addressing the audience) said: 'Those who are here, listening to me, should convey my message to those who are not here.' He continued, 'Do not become infidels after I depart lest you start slaying each other.' "

(Musnad Ahmad, Vol. 1, p 230)

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HADHRAT MUHAMMAD MUSTAFA[saw] — EMBODIMENT OF COMPASSION

Mansura Bashir Minhas, Miami, FL

"Islam is the *best religion*, with the *worst followers.*" This quote is often attributed to George Bernard Shaw.

In modern times, this concern is exacerbated when Islam's message is being audaciously misconstrued by radicals within its realm that allows for increasing doubts to be cast upon the whole Muslim world as a homogenous and monolithic group with a violent tendency. When the character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] - *'Rehmat-ullil Alameen'* (Mercy for the entire world) is maligned, it perplexes and distresses those who know the details of his life as he continuously strived for the betterment of humans and he served by example and showed the world that even the staunchest enemies can be overcome with the sheer force of humility, compassion and kindness.

For millions of rational and moderate Muslims, when the Holy Prophet's[saw] example of extreme benevolence and love is disregarded by the radicals, they are deeply perturbed by such elements' fictitious understanding of a faith whose essence is peace. Indeed, this is a grave injustice to the holy personage of the Holy Prophet of Islam[saw] and it can only be attributed to their selfish motives. When other groups within Islam somehow fail to defend their faith and the character of the Holy Prophet[saw] emphatically, it accentuates the predicament and contributes to the myths propagated by the opponents of Islam.

Only if more Muslims were to enhance the confidence about their own faith and stop relying on the Mullahs' distorted interpretations, it could somehow counter the vicious allegations against Islam. The apologetic and quiet stance of certain Muslims stems from their having left the matters of faith into the hands of the clerics for too long. When Muslims were sincere to the core Islamic values and principles, they were able to prosper and were able to keep radicalization at bay.

The debate about defending the honor of the Holy Prophet[saw] is an emotional one with touches the sensitivities of Muslims worldwide. It is inconceivable to expect any Muslim to remain unaffected when the honor of the Holy Prophet[saw] comes under attack. Every Muslim is aggrieved and hurt, however the reactions of various segments within the Muslim population are quite different. The hardliners set out to kill any person who is 'perceived' to be blasphemous and utterly disregard the Holy Prophet's[saw] personal example in similar situations. They ignore his prime example when he forgave his staunchest enemies and despite bitter persecution, he persevered and continued to pray for his enemies.

Such outstanding display of compassion can only be attributed to the Holy prophet[saw]. However, it would not be unrealistic to expect his followers to incorporate only a subtle tone of his extreme restraint. In the person of Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw], prophet hood was perfected and he was the *raison d'être* for the creation of the universe. To even entertain the thought that laws are needed to protect his honor seem frivolous. When Allah has promised to protect the Perfect book- the Holy Qur'an, it is unimaginable that He would disregard the Messenger who was its recipient.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad's[saw] life is marked with numerous instances where he demonstrated utmost resilience and patience in the face of hardship; he even forgave his staunchest enemies. The victory of Mecca was astounding and unique, devoid of the typical bloodshed that is attributed to triumphant victorious battles of the world. Even the few men who were killed at that time were convicted felons and not enemies of Islam. Amnesty was granted to all and sundry who chose to surrender. Human nature is extremely susceptible to grandiose

and even the weak have the tendency to transform into tyrants at the mere taste of authority. However, our Prophet[saw] was no ordinary mortal. He was distinguished in his characteristics and even the most common aspects of his life have a remarkable essence to them.

The Holy Prophet's[saw] love for Allah was exceptional and exemplary. His love for mankind was a mere reflection of this love of God. Just as Allah treats His creation with utter Grace and Mercy, his most beloved Prophet inculcated that spirit in his own character and his love for Allah radiated through each and every action and deed. Allah mentions this in verse 128 of *Sura Al-Tauba:*

"Surely, a Messenger has come unto you from among yourselves; grievous to him is it that you should fall into trouble; he is ardently desirous of your welfare; and to the believers he is specially compassionate and merciful." (9:128)

Born an orphan, he was inclined to feel the pain, loss and desperation of the hapless. His life lacked stability during the formative years, which ultimately fostered a sense of resilience, adaptability and humility. A young man of 25 commanded such immense respect that the formidable leaders of *Quraish* trusted him to come up with an equitable solution to their dispute. This speaks volumes about his wisdom and fairness. These were unique and distinguishing qualities in sixth century Arabia which was riddled with rampant discord, enmity and barbarism.

The Holy Prophet[saw] had a deep and extraordinary sense of commitment. His legacy is profound as he amply demonstrated it through his multifaceted roles in life as to how to lead a life. He incorporated his message in his deeds and the wisdom of each and every of his action depicts how his character was an embodiment of the best traits a man could ever possess. His compassion was outstanding and unparalleled.

Fast forward fourteen hundred years and Muslims find themselves in the same predicament as the natives of sixth century Arabia. Some radical segments have chosen barbarism over civility, their thought process is entrenched in medievalism and they are the most backward and ignorant in today's world.

What went wrong and what led to their astray? Over centuries they ignored the prime example of the Prophet of Islam, Hadhrat Muhammad[saw]. When they adopt barbaric means in a so called attempt to honor the Prophet and kill people ruthlessly, they indeed dishonor the Prophet themselves. Had they any semblance of civilization and studied the character of the Holy Prophet[saw], they would have not even entertained the thought of killing human beings.

If the killings to defend the honor of the Holy Prophet[saw] were the random acts of a few, they could easily be dismissed as the lone acts of individuals who got it all wrong about blasphemy. As the recent assassinations of two prominent politicians in Pakistan have exposed, the killings are just a tip of the iceberg and reflective of a gory and dreadful scenario. The killer mindset is rampant among certain Muslim groups and it transcends borders and it has lately found a new home in Indonesia. A pluralistic country by tradition, Indonesia finds its core diversity at stake. In February, the whole world watched in horror as Ahmadis came under the attacks of fanatics. The manner of the attacks depicts the monstrosity of the ideology of hate that is spreading among the Muslim world.

Ironically, these fanatics have reduced the religion of Islam to a set of rituals, one that completely lack the true essence and spirit of the faith. They ignore the Holy Prophet's[saw] example which is extremely well documented and indisputable. They fail to comprehend that faith is ultimately geared towards inculcating a relationship with Allah and that cannot be complete unless humans inculcate the Divine attributes of mercy, compassion and kindness and treat their fellow human beings accordingly. A religion which fosters these values is complete and is indeed the 'way of life' as demonstrated by the Prophet of Islam[saw].

The Holy Prophet[saw] was an embodiment of all exceptional human qualities. He was extremely sensitive; even to the welfare of animals and other living things such as

plants and trees. How could the Prophet of Islam[saw], who exhibited the best human traits, endorse the violent actions of those Muslims who don't shy from barbarically killing those who simply disagree with them? Arrogance breeds contempt. This is the state of the radical Muslims. Had they delved into the Holy Prophet's[saw] life and studied it in earnest, they would have refrained from violence and acrimony. Hadhrat Muhammad[saw] was a recipient of a message of peace, coexistence and exemplary tolerance in the face of sheer adversity. Ironically some Muslims are unsure about the Holy Prophet's[saw] true stance and it is time that they educate themselves and the truth will ultimately become evident.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] was able to transform the uncivilized Arabs and he instilled in them humility, compassion and love of humanity. There can be no greater need in modern times, than the earnest return to that true message and example of the Holy Prophet[saw]. A study of his life is the dire need of the day. Unless Muslims comprehend that their salvation lies in incorporating the Holy Prophet's[saw] example and use his life as a true and guiding force, they can never be true to their faith and cause. In fact, they cannot even do justice to their worldly duties.

All that ails the Muslims in present times stems from a lack of *Taqwa* and even though they have a self assumed false perception that they are the guardians of the honor of the Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa[saw], their actions are in fact to the contrary and akin to blasphemy.

Blasphemy literally translates into 'impious utterance or action concerning God or sacred things'. It is not difficult to conclude in light of this definition that when a human being is killed in the name of a Prophet, the killer indeed could not be acting in his name as he was an embodiment of compassion for all living things.

The Holy Prophet[saw] demonstrated astounding displays of mercy that extended beyond humans and his care was all-encompassing for all living things. Once when someone took bird eggs from a nest, it caused distress to the mother bird. Upon learning this, Holy Prophet instructed that the eggs be returned to the nest. So astounding was his mercy and it remains unparalleled in human history. Killing birds for the sake of pleasure and enjoyment is not a big deal for many people at all.

A study of the character of the Holy Prophet[saw] is a dire need for the modern day mankind. It holds the key to the reformation of the Muslim world and can also serve as a beacon light for the rest of the world in these troubling, tumultuous times when peace, humility, compassion and kindness are rare and fleeting characteristics.

May Allah enable all Muslims to incorporate the Holy Prophet's[saw] example in their lives. *Ameen.*

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Moral Training

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that once while the Holy Prophet[saw] was sitting in the Mosque, a man came and offered his Prayer. Then he came up to the Holy Prophet[saw] and greeted him. The Holy Prophet[sa] returned his greeting and said: "Go back and repeat your *Salat* for you have not performed it properly. He went back, performed the *Salat* and came up to the Holy Prophet[sa] and greeted him. This happened three times. Then the person said: 'By God Who has sent you with the Truth! I cannot perform Prayer better than this. Therefore, tell me the correct way to perform Prayer.' At this, the Holy Prophet[sa] said: "When you stand for Prayer, first say *Takbir,* then recite the Holy Qur'an as much as you can, then with full composure go into *ruku'*, then stand up straight, then prostrate with full composure, then get up from prostration and sit completely, then do the second prostration. Perform all of the Prayer like this, slowly and correctly.' " *(Sahih Bukhari Kitabul Adhan,)*

Hadhrat Malik bin Huwairith[ra] relates: "We were a group of young men of about the same age who came to the Holy Prophet[saw], and we stayed with him for twenty days. He was a most kind and considerate person. He perceived that we were eager to return to our families. He inquired from us about those we had left behind, and we told him. Then he said: 'Now return to your families and stay with them, and teach them and ask them to act upon these, and establish *Salat* the way you have seen me offer the *Salat*. At the time of the *Salat*, one of you should call the *Adhan* and the oldest of you should lead the Prayer.' "*(Sahih Bukhari Kitabul Adhan .)*

HOLY PROPHET'S[saw] DEEP LOVE FOR THE HOLY QUR'AN

Raja Mubarak Ahmad

Translated by Arifa Haleem

The Prophet[saw] of God used to read the Sacred Scriptures. The teachings in them were everlasting and were also of keeping one firm on them. (Al-Bayyanah 4.3)

With reference to Hadhrat Aisha's[ra] narration the Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah[as] while explaining the Holy Pro-phet's[saw] unsurpassed love of the Holy Qur'an said, "How far did he carry out the commands of the Holy Qur'an?" Related to this every one knows the famous answer of Hadhrat Aisha[ra]. When it was asked about the "*Khulq*" of the Holy Prophet[saw] she asked, "Do you not recite the Holy Qur'an.?" The enquirer asked, "Why?" She said that the Holy Prophet's[saw] morals were the exact representation of the Holy Qur'an.

(Muslim, Kitabus salat al-musafireen bab jame'us salatullail wa min nam anhu au marz, Haidth No 1739).

As it is written in The Holy Qur'an, Pray to God and he prayed. As it is written in the Holy Qur'an to comply with human rights, he fulfilled the human rights. All the things that were commanded to do, he did them and those that were forbidden in the Holy Qur'an, he abstained from them. The Holy Qur'an commanded fasting, alms giving and paying *Zakat*. He maintained the highest standard by doing so. The Holy Qur'an has instructed to treat the people by kindly, he set an example of such an extreme politeness (kindness) which could not be found anywhere. He forgave even his bloodthirsty enemies. If God Almighty strictly instructed him to reform the society, he showed full submission and obedience. So which command did he not obey fully by maintaining the highest standard? Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] has explained the relationship between the Holy Pophet[saw] and the Holy Qur'an very nicely by an example i.e., the Holy Qur'an and the Messenger[saw] of God are the two pearls that have come out together from the same shell.

If you want to know the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, observe the life of the Holy Prophet[saw]. If you want to get information about his life and want to see how he used to spend his mornings, evenings, days and nights, you should read all about the commandments of the Holy Qur'an and also read about the things, which were directed to do and not to do. All his character will be in front of you. *Khutbat-e–Masroor, vol.3, pp. 131-130)*

The Holy Prophet's[saw] deep love for the Holy Qur'an is such a vast subject that it is not in the human capacity to give it its full credit. From it's fascinating and beautiful aspects only a few are being explained.

When the Holy Qur'an started being revealed to the Holy Prophet[saw] his first proof of extreme love for it was that he appointed the "*Katbeen-e-Wahi*" to write and preserve the Qur'anic revelations. As soon as the Holy Prophet[saw] received a Revelation he dictated every verse to the *Katbeen -e-Wahi* and it was recorded in writing by them. The *Katbeen-e-Wahi* whose names are mentioned in the history of Islam were fifteen in number. Besides the *Khulafa-e-Rashideen,* the names of Hadhrat Zaid bin Thabit[ra], Hadhrat Abdullah bin Rawaha[ra] and Hadhrat Zubair bin al Awwam[ra] are also included in them.

The Holy Prophet[saw] gave everlasting proof of his extreme love for the Holy Qur'an in such a manner that even in his life time he trained thousands of memorizers of the Holy Qur'an. He always stressed a lot on the meritoriousness of committing the Holy Qur'an to memory. He used to say that a person who memorizes the Holy Qur'an, on the day of Judgment it will save him from the torture of Hell. There is no doubt that God Almighty blessed the Holy Prophet[saw] with illustrious and devoted Companions who always tried their utmost to acquire every merit in everyway. So when he made the announcement, the Companions of the Holy Prophet[saw] started to commit the Holy Qur'an to memory in a very large number. Even

such people tried to commit the Holy Qur'an to memory whose enunciation was not clear and who were men of weak knowledge. So Hadhrat Imam Ahmad on the authority of Hadhrat Abdullah bin Umar[ra] narrates that a man came to the Holy Prophet[saw] and said, "O Messenger[saw] of God! I read the Holy Qur'an but my mind does not grasp it fully. It shows that not only the men of learning tried to memorize the Holy Qur'an but even the common people were also in a habit of committing it to memory. Besides the preservation of revelations and the training of the memorizers, the Holy Prophet gave another proof of his deep love for the Holy Qur'an. He trained a group of teachers who under his supervision memorized the whole of the Qur'an and then taught it to the other people.

The names of the four highly talented and top most memorizer teachers were Hadhrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud[ra], Hadhrat Salim Maula Abi Hudhaifa[ra], Hadhrat Mu'adh bin Jabal[ra] and Hadhrat Ubayy bin Ka'b[ra]. Out of them two Companions were *Muhajirs* and the other two were *Ansars*.

Besides these four *Muhajirn* and *Ansar* there were uncountable Companions who memorized the Holy Qur'an in obedience to the Holy Prophet[saw] as it is mentioned in the biography under the incident of Bi'r Ma'unah i.e., in Hijra 2nd at the request of some tribes, the Holy Prophet[saw] sent seventy Companions to teach *Deen* to the people and they all were the memorizers of the Holy Qur'an.

In the lifetime of the Messenger[saw] of God, the number of the memorizers increased so much that it reached up to thousands. Immediately after the death of the Messenger[saw] of God [saw] when Musailimah rebelled and intended to attack Medina with a hundred thousand soldiers, then along with the other Companions of the Holy Prophet[saw], Khalid Bin Walid[ra] formed a special force of three thousand Companions who had committed the Holy Qur'an to memory.

This is the matchless proof of our master and lord, the Holy Prophet's[saw] intense liking and deep love for the Holy Qur'an that he in his lifetime trained thousands of memorizers of the Holy Qur'an.

The Fascinating Styles of Reciting the Holy Qur'an

Hadhrat Qatadah[ra] narrated, "I asked Hadhrat Anas[ra] about the recitation of the Holy Prophet[saw]. He said, the Holy Prophet[saw] used to recite the Holy Qur'an in a pauseful manner."

(Sunan Abi Dawood, Kitabul witer bab istehbab al terteel fil qira'ata)

Hadhrat Ummul Mu'mineen, Umme Salma[ra] mentioned about the recitation of the Holy Prophet[saw] that he recited so clearly that the listener could understand each and every word.

(Abu Dawood, Kitabul witer bab istehbab al terteel fil qira'ata)

Hadhrat Umme Salma[ra] narrates the Holy Prophet's[saw] method of reciting the Holy Qur'an, that he used to recite the Holy Qur'an in pauseful manner. After reciting *Al Hamdo lillahi Rabbil Alameen*, he paused and then recited *Ar Rehma nirraheem* and again he paused.

(Mishkat al-Msabeeh, Kitab faza'ilal Qur'an al-babul awwal al-fasaluthathaani)

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] sometimes at night used to recite the Holy Qur'an loudly and sometimes slowly.

(Sunan Abi Dawood, Kitab at tatawa' bab firaf'al saut bil qira'ata fi salatallail)

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, "God Almighty does not listen to any thing so attentively as He listens to The Holy Qur'an when the Messenger[saw] of God recites it in beautiful tone."

(Sunan Abi Da'ood, Kitabul witr bab istehbab attarteel fil qir'ah)

To Recite Attentively and Thoughtfully

It is the Tradition from Abu Hadhaifa[ra] that he observed his prayer with the Holy Prophet[saw]. When he bowed down (was in *Ruku'*) he recited "*Subhana Rabbi Yal Azim*" and in prostration he "recited *Subhana Rabbi Yal A'la*"

When there was any verse of blessing, he stopped and prayed for the blessings. When there was any verse related to punishment, he stopped and prayed to seek His protection.

(Sunan Abi Dawood, Kitab as- salat bab ma yaqulurrjal fi ruku' wa sujud)

Hadhrat Ibne Abbas[ra] narrated that Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] said, "O

Prophet[saw] of God the signs of old age have started to show in you."The Holy Prophet[saw] replied, "*Surah Hud, Surah Waqi'ah, Surah Mursalat and Surah Takwir* etc have made me old."

(Tirmidhi , Kitab tafsir al Qur'an bab wa min sura waqi'ah)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih Khamis[aba] says, "In *Surah Hud* even those nations are mentioned which due to the denial of the Prophets were killed. The Holy Prophet[saw] who was a blessing for all the worlds, his mind used to be disturbed by the very thought that even now on account of their denial lest the nation should be tortured with punishment. Previous Prophets were sent only for their own nations but he was the Prophet for the whole of the world. So he was not only worried about the existing nations of this time but also about the coming generations and all the nations of the world. He was worried lest these people should be punished by the wrath of God Almighty. So this was the reason that he used to pray, beg and seek mercy from God Almighty."

(Khutabate-e-Masroor, vol. 3, p. 135)

Recitation of the Holy Qur'an and the Fear of God Almighty

Hadhrat Sa'ib bin Abdullah[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] led the *Fajr* Prayer in Mecca. He started recitation from *Surah Al-Muminun,* when the names of Hadhrat Musa[as] and Hadhrat Aaron[as] were mentioned, he started coughing due to the fear of God Almighty and he bowed down.

(Muslim, Kitabus salat bab alqira'ata fissubh)

Hadhrat ibne Abbas[ra] narrated that *Ummul Mu'mineen* Hadhrat Aisha[ra] told me, she enquired about the verse:

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهٖ ۖ وَالْاَرْضُ جَمِيْعًا
قَبْضَتُهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَالسَّمٰوٰتُ مَطْوِيّٰتٌۢ بِيَمِيْنِهٖ ۚ

And they do not esteem Allah, with the esteem that is due to Him and the whole earth will be but His handful on the Day of Resurrection and the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand. (39:68)

The Holy Prophet[saw] said that God says He is *Jabbar* He is such and such. God Almighty explains His exaltation. The narrators say that the Holy Prophet[saw] was explaining this so excitedly that the pulpit of the Messenger[saw] of God was shaking in such a way that we thought it might not fall down along with him.

(Al-Durrul Manshur tafsir al-Zumar verse 68)

The Holy Prophet's[saw] fear of God Almighty was at such a stage that while commenting a verse, his whole body shivered with His fear.

After submitting these Traditions this humble person mentions some of those Traditions that show what methods the Holy Prophet[saw] adopted to inculcate in his Companions strong love and affection for the Holy Qur'an and what were his advices for them.

Hadhrat Abdullah bin Mas'ood[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] addressed me to recite the Holy Qur'an to him. The narrator said, "I humbly said, should I recite The Holy Qur'an to you? In fact the Holy Qur'an was revealed to you." He answered my question by saying, "I like to listen the Holy Qur'an from any one else also besides me." Hadhrat Abdullah[ra] says, "I started reciting *Surah Al-Nisa.* When I reached up to the verse (*fa kaifa idha ji'na*) the Holy Prophet[saw] told to me to stop"

Hadhrat Abdullah[ra] said, "I looked at the Holy Prophet[saw], his eyes were shedding tears."

(Bukhari, Kitab fazailul Qur'an bab qaul ai ma quri al Qari Hasbuk)

The Promised Messiah[as] says that the Holy Prophet[saw] listened to the recitation of the Holy Qur'an in a beautiful tone and he also wept while listening to it. When the verse "*wa ji'na beka"* was recited he wept and said, "I cannot listen to it any more." He might have thought about himself as being a witness. If there is any memorizer of the Holy Qur'an who recites it in beautiful tone we also have a wish of listening it.

(Malfoozat vol. 3 page 162)

Hadhrat Abdur Rehman bin Sa'ib[ra] narrated that Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas[ra] came to us, his eyesight was lost. I greeted him. He asked, "Who are you?" I explained to him .He said, "Bravo! my nephew I have heard that you recite the Holy Qur'an in a beautiful tone. I have heard it from the Holy Prophet[saw] that he used to say, the Holy Qur'an has been revealed in a sorrowful manner (its recitation gives birth to sorrow in the *Momin* for the Day Of Judgment). When you recite the Holy Qur'an, weep. If you can not weep then make your appearance like that.

When you recite the Holy Qur'an recite it in a beautiful tone. Who ever does not recite the Holy Qur'an in beautiful tone, he is not from among us."

(Sunan Ibne Majah, Kitab aqamatus salat fi ha bab fi hasan al saut bil Qur'an)

The Blessings of Reciting the Holy Qur'an

Abu Hurairah[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] said when the people get together for the recitation of the Holy Qur'an and teach the others to read and learn in any ones house out of Allah's houses their hearts are blessed with peace. Benevolence covers them and the angels surround these people and God Almighty mentions about them to those beings who live near Him i.e., the Angels.

(Sunan Abu Dawood, Kitab salatul safar bab fi thawwab qira'a tul Qur'an)

Hadhrat Uthman[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said that he is the best person among you who learns the Holy Qur'an and teaches it to others.

(Bukhari, Kitabut Tafsir bab khairukum man ta'allamul Qur'an wa ilma)

Hadhrat Aisha[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said that the person who recites the Holy Qur'an and he is an expert in it, he will be with those recorders (angels) who are pious. The person who recites the Holy Qur'an and it is hard for him or it is difficult for him to recite it, there is a double reward for him. *(Tirmidhi, Abwab faza'il-e-Qur'an ma ja fi faza'il qari al- Qur'an)*

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said when a scholar of the Holy Qur'an comes on the Day of Judgment, the Holy Qur'an will recommend him to God Almighty by saying, O Allah dress him up in a suit." So the dress of honor will be put on him, then again it will say, "O God, be pleased with him. God Almighty will be pleased with him." Then it will be said to him to go on reading and climbing the stairs (of exaltation). For every verse one more virtue will be added.

(Tirmidhi, Abwab faza'il al-Qur'an bab ma ja min qir'a harfa minil Qur'an ma lahu minal ajri)

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, if you envy do it for two things one of them is to envy that person whom God Almighty has blessed with the Holy Qur'an and he recites it day and night. By listening to it his neighbor says if only I would have the luck to read like this, then I could also have acted upon it in the same way. The other thing is to envy that person whom God Almighty has blessed with wealth and he spends it for the sake of God's pleasure.

(Bukhari, Kitabut tafsir bab intba' sahib al-Qur'an)

Hadhrat Ali bin Abi Talib[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, he who read the Holy Qur'an and remembered it and considered its permissible things (*Halal* things) as permissible (*Halal*) and forbidden things (*Haram* things) as forbidden (*Haram*), then on account of it's blessing God Almighty will admit him into Heaven.

Hadhrat Mu'adh[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, the person who read the Holy Qura'n and also acted upon it, his parents will be conferred with two crowns. Their light will be more radiant than the light of the sun, which they had in their worldly homes. When this is the status of his parents, then think over what would be the status of that person who acted upon the teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

(Sunan Abi Dawood, Kitabul witr ab thawab qiraaat al-Qur'an)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba], while mentioning a *Hadith* and beautifully commenting on it said, "It is narrated by Abu Musa that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, 'The *Momin* who reads the Holy Qur'an and acts upon it, his example is like that fruit which tastes fine and its fragrance is also fine .The *Momin* who does not recite the Holy Qur'an but acts on it he is just like a date that tastes fine but it has no fragrance. The example of such a hypocrite who reads the Holy Qur'an is just like a fragrant plant. Its fragrance is good but its taste is bitter. The example of such a hypocrite who does not read the Holy Qur'an is like a bitter fruit that tastes bitter and also smells bitter.' "

(Bukhari, Kitab faza'il al Qur'an bab itham min ra'a ba qira'a tul Qur'an)

This *Hadith* further explains the Holy Qur'an that not only the recitation of the Holy Qur'an is necessary but to act upon it by understanding it is also important. Those who read the Holy Qur'an, ponder over it and also act upon it, they are just like

that fragrant fruit, which is good in taste as well as in fragrance. What a beautiful example it is that the fruit tastes good also. When a person eats something delicious, then he wishes to eat it again. So he who reads the Holy Qur'an in such a way that he understands it, this understanding will give him a kind of enjoyment too and when he acts on it, he will be spreading around its fragrance. Every one will be observing the beauty of its commandments in this person.

(Khutbat-e-Masroor vol.2 p. 689)

The fifth successor of the Promised Messiah[as] said that in the Traditions it is mentioned that on the day of the battle of Uhad the injured Companions of the Holy Prophet[saw] told him humbly of their helplessness to dig the graves for the martyrs. Many of them were injured also and the martyred were in a large number .It was very difficult to dig the grave for every one separately. They did not have courage and strength .The Holy Prophet[saw] told them to dig wider graves, prepare them nicely and bury two or three martyrs in one grave. He also said that among the martyrs give preference to that one who was more competent in the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an.

(Khutbat-e-Masroor vol.2 p.138)

Hadhrat Sahl bin Sa'd[ra] narrated that a woman came to the Holy Prophet[saw] and said, I have donated my "self" to Allah and His Messenger[saw]. The Messenger[saw] of God said, I don't have the urge for a woman. One of the Companions said to him, "Marry her to me". The Holy Prophet[saw] said, then give her a suit (of clothes) He said, I do not have clothes. The Holy Prophet[saw] said, give her something. Have not you got even an iron ring? That helpless person was very grieved. The Holy Prophet[saw] asked, have you read some portion of the Holy Qur'an? He replied, I have read certain *Suras*. The Holy Prophet[saw] said I have married you to her on account of your reading the Holy Qur'an.

(Bukhari, Kitabut tafsir bab khairukum min ta'alamal Qur'an wa ilma)

Hadhrat Abu Mas'ood Ansari[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[saw] while explaining the rules of appointing the Imam said, the person who among other people is more knowledgeable in the Holy Qur'an should be an Imam. If all of them are equal in the knowledge of Qur'an, then he who has more knowledge of the *Sunnah* should lead the prayer and if all are equal in it then he who is the first one in migration should be the *Imam* and if all of them are also equal in migration then the one who is senior in age among them should be an *Imam*.

(Muslim, Kitabus Salat bab man ahaqqu bil imamata)

It is a Tradition by Hadhrat Sa'd bin Abada[ra] that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, the person who forgets the Holy Qur'an after committing it to the memory on the Day of Judgment that person will be found in a state of leprosy.

(Sunan Abu Dawood, bab al tashdid fi man hifzal Qur'an thumma nasiya)

Hadhrat Sa'd bin Abada[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, he who forgets the Holy Qur'an after memorizing it he will meet God Almighty in such a condition as if his hand has been cut off .

Hadhrat Ibne Abbas[ra] Narrates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, he who has nothing inside him from the Holy Qur'an (i.e., there is nothing in his memory from the Holy Qur'an) is like an uninhabited house.

(Tirmidhi, abwab faza'il al-Qur'an bab ma ja fi man qara a herfa minal Qur'an ma la min ajr)

Hadhrat Ibne Umar[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, "The one who has read the Holy Qur'an in less than three days and nights has grasped nothing."

(Mishkat Shrif, kitab faza'il al-Qur'an)

The Promised Messiah[as] says, some ignorant people say that today we have finished the Holy Qur'an in a day but somebody should ask them to what use it is. You have used only tongue and left all the other organs completely. Where as God Almighty has made all the organs so that they should be used. This is the reason that it is mentioned in the *Hadith* that some people recite the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Qur'an curses them because their recitation is only their verbal utterances and they have not been acted upon.

(Malfoozat vol.4 page 611)

Blessings of the *Surahs* of the Holy Qur'an

Hadhrat Abu Saeed Bin Mu'alah[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] called me and said, "Before leaving the mosque I will let you know a *Surah* that is the most

blessed *Surah* of the Holy Qur'an, then he held my hand. When we were going to come out of the mosque, I requested, O Messenger[saw] of God you said, "You will let me know the most blessed *Surah* of the Holy Qur'an". The Holy Prophet[saw] said, "That *Surah* is *Alhamdo lillahi Rabbil Alamin.* Its name is *"Sab'a Mathani"* and Magnificient Qur'an and it is given to me".

(Sahih Bukhari, Kitabut Tafsir bab faza'il fatiha al-Qur'an)

Hadhrat Abu Saeed Khudhri[ra] narrated that a Companion[ra] heard some one repeatedly reciting *"Qul ho Wallahu Ahad"*

In the morning he came to the Messenger[saw] of God and mentioned that due to the shortness of the *Surah "Qul ho Wallah"* he considered it of less importance. The Holy Prophet[saw] said, "I swear in the name of Him, Who has full hold on my life this *Surah Qul ho Wallah* is equal to one third of the Holy Qur'an."

(Bukhari, kitabut tafsir bab faza'il Qul ho Wallahu Ahad)

Hadhrat Abul Darda[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said that a person who memorized ten verses from the beginning of *Surah Kahf* he will be saved from the *"Fitna"* (mischief) of *Dajjal.*

(Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, vol 6 page 449)

Hadhrat Uqba bin Amer[ra] narrates, "In the company of the blessed Prophet[saw] I was walking in *Muqam-e-Hajfa*, when suddenly there was darkness all around and wind storm started blowing. The Holy Prophet[saw] began to recite *Surah Falq* and *Surah Naas* and said. 'O Utba, seek protection with these two *Surahs.* No protection seeking person has ever sought such a protection.' "

(Sunnan Abu Dawood, bab fil mau'azz atainn)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] i.e., the fourth successor of the Promised Messiah[as] said that is why the Holy Prophet[saw] taught on one occasion that if you are suffering due to poverty and you are under the burden of debts, then go on reciting the last verses of the Holy Qur'an.

(Abu Dawud, kitabul adab bab ma ya qul eza subh)

Three *Surahs* that start with *"Qul"* convey the message of the "Oneness of God Almighty".

There is exclusive message for dependence on Him. So every kind of confinement whether it is spiritual or material or every kind of trouble whether it is spiritual or material goes on making the man dependent on other ones than Allah. *(Khutbat-e-Tahir Eidain)*

The Promised Messiah[as] says that what can be the best proof in regard to the pious and sacred life of the Holy Prophet [saw] that God Almighty appointed him as a Perfect Guide for the whole universe till the Day of Judgment. All the events of his life is a collection of practical teachings. As the Holy Qur'an is the verbal book of God Almighty and the laws of Nature are His practical book, in the same way the Holy Prophet's[saw] life is also a practical book, which is Commentary as well as Divine Precept of the Holy Qur'an. *(Malfoozat vol.3 p. 34 latest edition)*

Hadhrat Mirza Bashirud Din Mahmud[ra] the second Successor of the Promised Messiah[as] said, "The *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet [saw] is *Uswa-e-Husna* for us. His deeds support the Holy Book. The Companions of the Holy Prophet[saw] asked Hadhrat Aisha[ra] how were the morals of the Holy Prophet[saw]? She answered:

كَانَ خُلُقُهُ الْقُرْاٰنَ

(Musnad Ahmad Bin Hanbal vol. 2 page 91 Matba'ah Beirut 1978)

His morals were the same as the Holy Qur'an has explained .So words and actions do not clash in Truth. *(Anwarul Aloom vol 9 page 501)*

Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad Khalifatul Masih III[rh] says when we claim our love for the Holy Prophet[saw] then we will have to fulfill his every wish. What did he wish from us? He wished from us that we should also act upon the teachings of the Holy Qur'an exactly in the same way as the Holy Prophet[saw] acted upon them. When a question was asked from Hadhrat Aisha[ra], how were his morals, she replied,

كَانَ خُلُقُهُ الْقُرْاٰنَ

(Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal vol.6 page 91)

If you want to see the morals of the Holy Prophet[saw] then read the Holy Qur'an. His full life is a practical image of the Holy Qur'an. Whatever the Holy Qur'an said, he exactly acted upon it and so he instructed in his words and also guided with his actions. The love we claim for him, its demand is to mold

our lives exactly like his whole life. So if you are true in your claim and not deceiving yourself and God Almighty, then it is necessary for you to understand the Holy Qur'an yourself, act upon it and teach it to your children and to those people who are also your responsibility. Teach them the Holy Qur'an so that they could be capable of understanding its meanings and train them in such a way that whenever they listen to the recitation of the Holy Qur'an no power in the world could stop them from uttering *"Labbaik"*. May God it be like this, and may God make the magnificence of the Holy Qur'an be inculcated in our hearts, and it should be inculcated in such a way that we ourselves will be the ones who act upon its teachings, and we should be the ones to train our generations in such a manner that they should also be the lovers and the devotees of the Holy Qur'an. They should be the ones to sacrifice their lives for it and they should be the ones to mold their lives according to its instructions.

(Khutbat-e-Nasir vol.1, pp. 128-129)

So let us all together pledge today that the ways the Holy Prophet[saw] adopted for the deep love and great infatuation of the Holy Qur'an, we will also try our best to adopt them in our lives whole-heartedly and try to become a practical image of this sacred verse of the Promised Messiah[as].

Translation: My only wish in my heart is to kiss Your Holy Scripture all the time and to revolve around the Holy Qur'n because it is like the *Ka'bah* to me. (i.e., the house of Allah around which the people revolve).

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TABLIGH ACTIVITY: DISTRIBUTION OF FLYERS

Zahir M. Mannan, Tabligh Secretary, Hartford Jama'at

As part of the nationwide "**Muslims for Peace**" campaign sponsored by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA, a handful of Connecticut dwelling Muslim American Youth launched yet another intellectual outreach to show the true, peaceful face of Islam to their fellow compatriots. After a Youth Auxiliary general meeting at the Baitul Aman "House of Peace" Mosque in Meriden, CT on Saturday, March 19th, 2011 thirteen Ahmadi Muslims eagerly set out for the dissemination of two powerful brochures - the "**Muslims for Peace"** and "**Muslims for Loyalty**" fliers.

Three major locations were targeted, including downtown Meriden just a few miles from the Mosque, Union Station in New Haven and the New Haven Green. A wonderful opportunity arose at the New Haven Green where the Ahmadi Muslim Youth voicing their creed of peace and loyalty ran into an anti-war protest in support of the even larger one going on simultaneously in DC called the "**Resist the War Machine - Protest and March**". There, an electric exchange of contact information occurred between Ahmadi Muslims and board members of interfaith councils and peace committees as well as with the common folk. Sincere bridges of harmonious networking and promising collaborations were built. Dedicated participants from this spiritual endeavor distributed 500 "Muslims for Peace" fliers and 350 "Muslims for Loyalty" fliers making a grand total of 850!

The passionate drive was received again with an overwhelmingly pleasant feedback. Smiles, gratifications and healthy discussions from the public encouraged the group of young American Ahmadi Muslims to go out on such blessed ventures more often. These are the Muslims for peace who believe in the Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (peace be upon him), and are homegrown helpers actively against terrorism.

A heartfelt thank you to all those who participated. I must say that I am humbled to be the elected leader of these selfless American Ahmadi Muslim Youth who are ever ready to devote their time and energy in such noble causes.

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MY HEART GOES IN EARNEST TO MUHAMMAD[saw]

Sayyarah Hikmat

The world was enveloped in darkness!
Separately man was groping in ignorance!
When, from behind the mountains of Faran, rose the Sun of splendor!
And, the whole earth was bathed with sunshine and grandeur!

It was the birthday of Muhammad[saw], whose coming heralded the blessing for all the worlds!
Muhammad[saw], who is the Prophet of peace, kindness and love for all!
He gave us the lesson of mercy and pity for all!
The liberator of mankind from shackles of slavery!

An ambassador of tolerance, patience and equality!
He was a deliverer from the Cross!
My life and spirit be sacrificed for your sake!
For you are the light of my eyes!

Joy for my soul and comfort for my heart!
In the vicissitude of life, you are the core of my being!
In the tempestuous sea of life, you are my guide, my star!
You are the sole desire of my world!

All benefited from you, young and old!
Conquerors bowed to you, who once were so bold!
You were the savior of women, who were worse than slaves!
You are a model of perfection, in all codes of conduct and action!

A source of inspiration and motivation for the seekers of goodness and truth!
You told us that righteousness is the root of all goodness!
At the conquest of Mecca, he announced pardon for enemies for their callous crimes!
He was an embodiment of fortitude and patience!

But, today's mullahs have tarnished the name of religion!
May they follow the religion in its true concept!
They are the egocentric victim of false conceits!
They have little knowledge and poor information!

Malice, violence, bias damages your person!
Hate, injury, insult are the doings of the devil's workshop!
May we become your true messengers!
May we carry the banner of fraternity, humanity and charity in all corners!

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REVELATIONS, VISIONS AND PROPHECIES OF THE HOLY PROPHET[saw]

Karimullah Zirvi

It is apparent from the Holy Qur'an that some dreams and prophecies came true in the life of the Prophets while others were fulfilled after the passing of them. God Almighty had revealed to the Holy Prophet[saw] glad tidings and admonitions which are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. Once, regarding a Divine manifestation scene by the Holy Prophet[saw] during *Kasuf* Prayer he said, "Right here, at this moment, I have been shown by God Almighty the future events which have been promised to you." To the extent that I have been shown hell and heaven. What the Holy Prophet[saw] saw during the manifestation he described was so vivid that seeing the blessings of the heaven he moved forward to fetch them while seeing the ferocity of the hell he moved back. Some of the dreams, revelations and manifestations of the Holy Prophet[saw] are briefly described here:

Marriage with Hadhrat 'Ai'shah[ra]

God Almighty had beforehand revealed to the Holy Prophet regarding his marriage with Hadhrat 'Ai'shah[ra]. Hadhrat 'A'ishah[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said to her, "You have been shown to me twice in my dream. I saw you pictured on a piece of silk and someone said to me, 'This is your wife.' When I uncovered the picture, I saw that it was yours. I said, 'If this is from Allah, it will be accomplished.' "

(Sahih Bukhari Kitab Fada'il Ashabannabi[a], Bab taziijunnabi 'A'ishata[ra] wa qudumihal madinata wa bana-'ih biha)

False Claimants: Musailimah ibn Habib (*al-Kadhdhab*) and Aswad 'Ansi

Hadhrat Ibn 'Abbas[ra] relates that Musailimah ibn Habib (*al-Kadhdhab*) came to Medina while the Holy Prophet[saw] was alive and said: "I will obey Muhammad[saw] if he entrusts sovereignty to me when he passes away. Many people of his tribe were with him. One day, the Holy Prophet[saw] went to see him. Hadhrat Thabit bin Qais bin Shammas[ra] accompanied the Holy Prophet[saw]. The Holy Prophet[saw] had a thin stick of a date tree in his hand. Musailimah was sitting in the company of his people. The Holy Prophet[saw] told him: 'If you ask for this thin stick, I will not give even this to you. You will not escape God's judgment. If you move backward, God will hamstring you. I have been shown many things concerning your end. Thabit will answer your questions.' Then the Holy Prophet[saw] left. Hadhrat Ibn 'Abbas[ra] relates that he asked Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] what was meant by the comment of the Holy Prophet[saw] that I have been shown a lot of things concerning your end? Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] told him that the Holy Prophet[saw] had told him his dream.' The Holy Prophet[saw] said: 'Once I was asleep and I saw in a dream that I had two gold bracelets in my hand. I became a bit worried about these. In the dream, I was told to blow air on the bracelets. When I blew air on the bracelets, the bracelets disappeared. I interpreted the dream as: After I pass away, there will be two false claimants and liars who will revolt.' " So, the narrator explains that later on, it became clear that one of them was (Aswad) 'Ansi, who revolted in San'a' (Yemen) and the second one was Musailimah (*al-Kadhdhab*), who laid the foundation for the revolt in *Yamamah.*

(Sahi Muslim, Kitabar Ru'ya-, Bab ar-Ru'ya- annabi; Sahih Bukhari)

Death of Aswad 'Ansi

Hadhrat 'Amr bin 'Abdullah[ra] relates, "God Almighty had informed the Holy Prophet[saw] the night before the assassination of Aswad 'Ansi (the false claimant of the prophethood) about his death. In the morning, the Holy Prophet[saw] told them that Aswad 'Ansi had been killed by a blessed man. Someone asked the Holy Prophet[saw], 'Who is the person who has killed Aswad 'Ansi. The Holy Prophet[saw] said, 'His name is Firozban Firoz.' "

(Kanzul 'Ummal)

Death of the *Quraish* Leaders of Mecca in the Battle of Badr

God Almighty had shown to the Holy Prophet[saw] in a vision before the Battle of Badr the death of the *Quraish* leaders. In this regard, Hadhrat Anas[ra] relates, "I was travelling with Hadhrat 'Umar[ra] and we were in the middle of Mecca and Medina when Hadhrat 'Umar[ra] told me, 'One day before the Battle of Badr the Holy Prophet[saw] while pinpointing the place of death of the *Quraish* leaders told him that so and so leader of the *Quraish* will fall at such and such place during the Battle.' Hadhrat 'Umar[ra] then stated, 'The bodies of the leaders of the *Quraish* were found exactly at the places which were pinpointed by the Holy Prophet[saw].' "

Hadhrat 'Umar[ra] said to the Holy Prophet[saw], "O Messenger of Allah! By God Who has sent you with the Truth, the bodies were found exactly at the places you had pinpointed without the slightest mistake."

(Sahih Bukhari Kitabul Jihad, Bab ma qia fi dar' annabi[saw])

Prophecy Regarding the Death of Chosroes Pervaiz, the King of Persia

Chosroes Pervaiz, the king of Persia had ordered Badhan, the Governer of Yemen to imprison the Holy Prophet[saw] and present to him in his court. Badhan sent his two emissaries to the Holy Prophet[saw] with Chosroes' orders. The Holy Prophet[saw] told them to wait for a short while for his response. After a couple of days the Holy Prophet[saw] told the emissaries of the Governor of Yemen to go back as his Lord has revealed to him that He has killed their lord. When the representatives of the Governor of Yemen returned to him they received the news that Sherawiyyah had assassinated his father Chosroes Pervaiz.

Chosroes' Bracelets and Suraqah bin Malik

Suraqah bin Malik followed the Holy Prophet[saw] with the intention of arresting or killing him and getting the reward which was fixed by the infidels of Mecca for doing so. When he failed to do so he told to the Holy Prophet[saw] the intentions of his people and wished to offer the Holy Prophet[saw] some provisions for the journey and other things. The Holy Prophet[saw] did not accept his offer. Then he requested the Holy Prophet[saw] to give an undertaking of peace and protection for him in writing. The Holy Prophet[saw] told 'A-mir bin Fuhairah to do so. He wrote a guarantee on a piece of leather. When Suraqah bin Malik was leaving the Holy Prophet[saw] said, "Suraqah! How would you feel when the bracelets of the king of Persia will be given to you to wear. Suraqah said, 'Chosroes Pervaiz, the King of Persia.' The Holy Prophet[saw]

said, 'Yes, the bracelets of Chosroes Pervaiz.' "

After the conquest of Mecca, Suraqah bin Malik accepted Islam in Ji'ranah. When during the *Khilafat* of Hadhrat 'Umar[ra] the bracelets of Chosroes were presented to Hadhrat 'Umar[ra] in his court, he called Suraqah bin Malik and told him to bring forward his hands. Then he gave Suraqah bin Malik the bracelets to wear which he did.

(As-Siratul Halabiyyah, Vol. 2, p.45, Published in Beirut, Lebanon)

The Prophecy Regarding Sea Conquests

Hadhrat Anas[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] used to visit the house of Hadhrat Umm Haram bint Milhan[ra]. She was the wife of Hadhrat 'Ubadah bin Samat[ra]. The Holy Prophet[saw] once visited Hadhrat Umm Haram[ra] who presented food to him. Hadhrat Umm Haram[ra] began massaging the head of the Holy Prophet[saw] gently and he went to sleep. After a little while, he woke up smiling. Hadhrat Umm Haram[ra] asked the Holy Prophet[saw]: "Messenger[saw] of Allah! Why are you smiling? The Holy Prophet[saw] said: 'In my dream I have seen some of my followers who have left to fight in the way of Allah. Sitting on the wooden planks after boarding the ships, they looked like kings on thrones.' Hadhrat Umm Haram[ra] said: 'Messenger[saw] of Allah! Invoke Allah that He includes me among these people.' So the Holy Prophet[saw] prayed for her and went to sleep again. Again he woke up and was smiling. Hadhrat Umm Haram[ra] asked the Holy Prophet[saw]: 'Messenger[saw] of Allah! Why are you smiling?' The Holy Prophet[saw] said, 'I have again seen some warriors of mine who were going on a sea expedition, repeating the same dream.' Hadhrat Umm Haram[ra] besought: 'Messenger[saw] of Allah! Pray that God may include me among these conquerors.' The Holy Prophet[saw] said, 'You will be included in the first group.' " Thus, during the rule of Hadhrat Amir Mu'awiyah bin Abu Sufyan[ra], after disembarking from the ship, Hadhrat Umm Haram[ra] entered the island and while riding on a camel she fell and passed away there.

(Sahih Bukhari Kitab at-Ta'bir , Bab Ru'ya-' binnahar)

Prophecy Regarding the Glory of Islam

During the digging of the trenches in the Battle of Ahzab when the Holy Prophet[saw] struck the big solid rock with his pick-axe, there appeared three times a bright flash of light and each time the Holy Prophet[saw] said, "*Allahu Akbar*" in a loud voice. The Companions[ra] asked the Holy Prophet[saw] about the significance of the light and why he said "*Allahu Akbar*" each time there was the light. The Holy Prophet[saw] smiled and told them, "I struck the rock three times with the pick-axe, and three times I saw the scenes of the future glory of Islam. In the first spark I saw the Syrian palaces of the Roman Empire. I had the keys of those palaces given to me. The second time, I saw the palaces of Persia and Mada'in, and had the keys of Persian Empire given to me. The third time, I saw the gates of San'a and I had the keys of the kingdom of Yemen given to me. These are the promises of Allah.

The conquest of these great empires started during the *Khilafat* of Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] when Hadhrat Khalid bin Walid and Hadhrat Abu 'Ubaida[ra] conquered Syria. However, the prophecy was completely fulfilled in the *Khilafat* of Hadhrat 'Umar[ra] when Hadhrat Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas[ra] conquered Iran. Thus within a short period of time two great kingdoms, Rome and Persia, surrendered to Muslims.

(Sahih. Bukhari Kitab at-Ta'bīr, Bab Ru'ya allail)

PREVENTION OF MORAL DEGRADATION IN THE LIGHT OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

Nasir Mahmood Malik, National Tarbiyat Secretary

Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred; and forbids indecency and manifest evil and transgression. He admonishes you that you may take heed.' (16:91)

Honored Guests of the Promised Messiah[as]: It is our common observation that to protect society from any serious disease, responsible and knowledgeable leaders of society warn people about the potential risks from that disease and advise them of what they should or should not do. As human knowledge is not complete and is based on limited experience, such warnings and advice are neither complete nor pre-emptive. Nonetheless, those who heed such warnings and advice remain relatively safe and those who do not suffer the effects of that disease.

Moral degradation is worse than a complex and serious disease with devastating long term consequences. It refers to the process of declining from a higher to a lower level of morality and is seen as preceding or concomitant with the decline in quality of life as well as the decline of societies and nations. It has destroyed individuals, families, dynasties and nations alike from within. It starts slowly with seemingly harmless choices by some individuals but then it spreads like an epidemic affecting the society at large.

Moral decline or degradation begins when transcendent moral values, which have proven to be beneficial over time, are discarded for vain lustful desires. A study of human history suggests that moral decline begins with prosperity. In early America, the tendency to drift away from faith in times of prosperity was observed by a Puritan preacher Cotton Mather (1663-1728) who stated, "Religion begot prosperity, and the daughter devoured the mother."

Secular society, perhaps in the name of freedom of choice, is unwilling to condemn or prevent the spread of moral degradation; and even when it tries to it is unable to because of human limitations of knowledge, reasoning and wisdom. Such society goes in circles chasing the symptoms and dressing up the outcomes rather than addressing the root cause. In our times, examples of this phenomenon abound; like immodesty, adultery, cohabitation, teenage pregnancies, drinking, drugs, pornography, homosexuality, financial and political corruption, etc. Reflecting on the current condition of man, the Messiah of this age, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as], writes:

"The remarkable material progress of the current age has been more than counterbalanced by its deplorable spiritual decline, to the extent that the souls of men have lost their ability even to grasp obvious truths. It is apparent from a close study of humanity that a hidden and formidable force is pulling it downwards, and man is swiftly being dragged into a pit which is termed *Asfalus Safilin* (the lowest of the low). Such a complete change has come over the intellects of men that they have come to admire and praise things which are abhorrent and detestable to the spiritual eye. Pure truths are laughed at and ridiculed, and complete submission to God is looked upon as an absurdity. *(How to be free from sin)*

Unlike secular society, religious society looks towards sacred scriptures and traditions to prevent moral degradation. However, all religions are either silent or inadequate on this subject, except Islam. No other religion claims to be complete and universal, except Islam. It is only Islam that claims to provide perfect guidance for all human needs: physical, moral and spiritual. It is only Islam that addresses the root cause of moral decline in profound ways and provides a panacea to the believers for the cure of this fatal disease when it proclaims:

We gradually reveal understanding of the Qur'an which is a healing and a mercy to the believers.... (17:83)

I wish to first describe an overview of how Islam purports to prevent

moral degradation, then present a specific framework in which Islamic Philosophy and Teachings can be applied to prevent moral decline, and finally some simple Islamic tips that you and I can use on a daily basis to save ourselves and others from moral degradation.

Overview:

Islam prevents moral decline by:

- Explaining the nature of man (i.e., his strengths and weaknesses, his potential to do good and his propensity to do evil)
- Differentiating right from wrong
- Warning about the risks and dangers of moral degradation
- Providing complete guidance (dos & don'ts) on avoiding those risks

Presenting the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] as a model of moral excellence:

Verily, you have in the Prophet of Allah an excellent model,... (33:22)

Exhorting good people to prevent moral degradation with love, wisdom and compassion:

Let there be among you a group of people who should invite to goodness, and enjoin equity and forbid evil. (3:105)

As an example, let me review one profound Islamic teaching on the fundamental chemistry of moral development and degradation. This is the verse of the Holy Qur'an I recited in the beginning. Allah says:

Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred; and forbids indecency and manifest evil and transgression. He admonishes you that you may take heed.' (16:91)

Paraphrasing the explanation of this verse by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra]:

This verse contains three commandments and three prohibitions which briefly deal with all the various stages of moral and spiritual development of man. On the positive side it enjoins justice, the doing of good to others and kindness as between kindred; and on the negative side it forbids indecency, manifest evil and transgression. *Adl* (justice) implies that a person should treat others as he is treated by them... Higher than *Adl* is *Ihsan* (goodness) when man should do good to others regardless of what sort of treatment he receives from them... The last and highest stage of moral development is *ita'e dhil qurba* (giving like kindred), where a believer is expected to do good to others prompted by a natural impulse like a mother whose love for her children springs from natural impulse. After a believer has attained this stage his moral development becomes complete. Moral decline is identified with three words, viz., *fahsha* (indecency), *munkar* (manifest evil) and *baghy* (transgression). *Fahsha* signifies vice of which the knowledge is confined to the doer and *munkar* signifies those evils which others also see and condemn, though they may not suffer any direct loss or infringement of their own rights by them. *Baghy*, however, comprehends all those vices and evils which not only are seen, felt and denounced by others but which do them direct harm as well. These three simple words cover all conceivable vices.

This commandment and insight into human nature is so profound and critical that it is recited every week in the second portion of the Friday sermon lest we forget. This also shows that Islam relies heavily on the system of reminders because humans are forgetful by nature.

Framework

Now, let me apply Islamic Philosophy and Teachings on a specific framework to prevent moral degeneration. As individuals and families are the fundamental building blocks of society are individuals and families, the building blocks of Prevention of Moral Degeneration are preservation of morals and integrity of individuals and then families.

Individuals

According to the Holy Qur'an, the fundamental root cause of all evils is *shirk* (i.e., associating gods with Allah). To preserve the morals of individuals, Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

Thy Lord has commanded that ye worship none but Him... (17:24)

Explaining this verse, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] states that *shirk*

causes man to sink morally and spiritually. Belief in Divine Unity is a seed out of which grow all virtues, and lack of which lies at the root of all sins.

We observe that a lot of people proclaim that they believe in One God but still commit sins. Explaining this paradox, The Promised Messiah[as] writes:

Belief only means accepting something in good faith, but true awareness means to actually experience that belief. It is impossible for true awareness—*Ma'rifat*—and sin to dwell in one heart, just as it is impossible for it to be day and night at the same time. *(How to be free from sin)*

Regarding *shirk*, The Promised Messiah[as] writes:

Anyone who gives reverence to his own plans, mischief or clever designs as he should revere God alone, or depends upon another person as he should depend upon God alone, or reveres his own ego as he should revere God alone, in all such conditions he is an idol-worshipper in the sight of Allah. *(Siraj-ud-Din 'Isa'i ke Char...)*

In this respect, Hadrat Khalifatul Masih I[ra] says:

To associate anyone in the name, action, or worship of Allah constitutes *shirk*, and to carry out all good deeds solely for the pleasure of Allah is called worship.

Warning against shirk, Hahdhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] states:

Among the ills that take over imperceptibly is *shirk*. Even a hint of *shirk* is unacceptable to God. A Muslim who claims to be firm on the Unity of God, needs to understand the subtlety of the concept of Unity of God and the subtlety of *shirk* and be extremely careful in this fast developing world. *(Conditions of Bai'at)*

So, the first step in preserving the morals of individuals is belief in the Oneness of God and condemnation of *shirk*.

The second step in preserving the morals of individuals is his obligation towards his parents. Allah says:

Thy Lord has commanded, that ye worship none but Him, and that ye show kindness to parents... (17:24)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] states that it is his parents who first of all direct a man's attention to God and it is in the parental mirror that Divine attributes are reflected and on a minor human scale are given practical expression....Man is told that since it is not possible for him to repay God's favors, he should at least refrain from *shirk*. However, in the case of his parents, man can return their love and kindness, although only very inadequately. Therefore, he is commanded to be kind and generous to them.

The third step in preserving the morals of individuals is his obligation towards his kinsman, the poor and the wayfarer and proper use of his wealth. Allah says,

Give to the kinsman his due, and to the poor and the wayfarer, and squander not thy wealth extravagantly. (17:27)

Families

To preserve the morals and integrity of families, Islam provides a complete code of conduct. The ideal Islamic family starts with the marriage of a believing man and a compatible believing woman and culminates with the raising of believing children. To successfully navigate through this family journey, Islam defines the roles and responsibilities of the married couple first as spouses and then as parents. Regarding the married couples, Allah admonishes:

Men are guardians over women.....Virtuous women are obedient and guard the secrets of their husbands with Allah's protection.... (4:35)

Qawwamun means maintainers, protectors, or managers of affairs. Thus, we infer that the husbands are responsible for the physical, moral and spiritual well being of their wives and children. Such husbands can become *qawwamun* only if their wives cooperate with them and protect them by guarding their trusts.

Regarding the married couples as parents, Allah admonishes:

O ye who believe! Save yourselves and your families from Fire... (66:7)

So, as parents believers are responsible for striving hard in protecting themselves and their families from breaching any and all boundaries of human behavior commanded by Allah. For example, Allah commands:

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوٓا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ إِمْلَاقٍ

Slay not your children for fear of poverty... (17:32)

Explaining this verse, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] states that: "Those miserly parents who do not provide proper education (secular, moral, and religious), food and clothing to their children, in fact, contribute to their physical and moral death."

Tips

Now, let me review some simple Islamic tips that we can use on a daily basis to save us and others from moral decline. As a general principal, Islam states that:

Follow not the footsteps of Satan. (2:169)

Who is Satan? Satan means the rebellious and the one who transgresses or exceeds proper bounds. So, to protect ourselves from any moral lapse, we should not follow those who exceed the boundaries set by the Islamic code of conduct, rather we should follow the practice of the Holy Prophet[saw].

In this context, peer pressure has a significant impact. Granted that peer pressure is sometimes not in our control, but the choice of peers is largely in our control. We need to be very careful in selecting our friends and peers, Allah says:

O ye who believe! Fear Allah and be with the truthful. (9:119)

The Holy Prophet[saw] defines a worthy friend as the one whose very sight makes you remember Allah, whose conversation increases your knowledge and whose deeds remind you of the Hereafter. *(Bukhari)*

In selecting our company, we should have the goal, and we all have the potential, to become those seeing whom others may remember Allah, listening to whom others may increase their knowledge and whose deeds may remind others of the Hereafter. Obviously, in some professional and educational settings we may not have complete choice, but pious company should be our default setting. We can have such pious company if we frequent our mosques for *Salat* and other *Jama'at* or auxiliary activities. *Salat*, especially congregational *Salat*, plays a significant role in preventing moral decline as Allah guarantees that:

Surely, Prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil. (29:46)

Similarly, we can find such company if we frequently watch MTA. Lastly, *Istighfar* is the ultimate Islamic shield against moral degradation. It is the most potent prayer for repentance and forgiveness of past sins and protection from potential future mistakes.

Conclusion:

In short, Islam is the only religion that has complete and perfect guidance on preventing moral degradation. However, one may ask as to why do we see moral decline in Muslims? The answer is that Islamic guidance is effective only for those who are righteous and believe in the hereafter. Allah says:

Those who believe not in the Hereafter, We have made their deeds appear beautiful to them, so they are wandering blindly. (27:5-6)

Explaining this verse, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] states:

It is a natural law that when man pursues an evil course, thinking that he is not accountable for what he does, he begins to justify his conduct as good and proper.

Hereafter generally refers to the life after death. But, in making our daily choices, if we look at the long term consequences of those choices rather than the immediate gratification or expediency, we can save ourselves a lot of grief. A sense of right and wrong and the potential to be good are built in our DNA. Allah says:

And by the soul and its perfection – and He revealed to it what is wrong for it and what is right for it – He indeed truly prospers who purifies it; and he who corrupts it is ruined. (91:8-11)

Explaining this verse, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] states:

"God has implanted in man's nature a feeling or sense of what is good and bad and has revealed to him that he could achieve spiritual perfection by eschewing what is bad and wrong and adopting what is right and good.

As torch bearers of Islam, it is our fundamental obligation to prevent moral degradation in our community so that we may attract others to the beauty of Islam. *Ameen.*

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AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY'S INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT SHUNNING BAD CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS RELATED TO WEDDING CEREMONIES

Entering into the *Bai'at* of the Promised Messiah[as] obligates us to refrain from every such thing that creates an innovation in the religion

Translated by: Belal Khalid

By nature, human beings are social beings and they carry out their functions according to their capabilities while living in a society. Every rightful method adopted by human beings for the sake of living in society is considered legitimate. However, human beings become enslaved to some of these practices to such a degree that they become of part of their lives and take them away from their responsibilities and create many ills. Human beings adopt these methods only because of the pressure of the society. People often think about what others would say if they did not perform a certain act. In essence, these practices that are considered to be good practices have no significance more than an empty shell without any substance or spirit. These practices ultimately take the form of customs and traditions.

In every era human beings have adopted certain customs and traditions. Some of these customs impact a large part of the society. We could recognize these bad customs from the exploitation caused by them. People act upon these customs knowing that they are a burden for them. Customs could be good and bad. The customs that become an impediment for the growth of the nation or have a negative impact on the religious observances are bad customs and should be shunned.

Any new practice that conflicts with the *Sunnah* (practice) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[sa] or the *Khulafa-e-Rashideen* is considered an innovation. According to *Ahadith*, every new thing is not a bad thing. A new practice could be good or bad. These practices are called customs and traditions in the society. The Promised Messiah[as] gave the following example in regards to good practices:

"In reality, *Shariah* does not prohibit all new practices. If this was true, then everything like riding on a train and obtaining news by postal services should be considered bad practices." (Al-Badr, January 17th, 1907, pp.4)

The example of a bad practice found in *Ahadith* is that once some companions of the Holy Prophet[saw] vowed not to marry, pray all night and fast every day. When the Holy Prophet[saw] found out about it, he said, "Look, I marry; I pray at night and rest too; I fast and then I stop doing it". He then said, "The one who moves away from my *Sunnah* is not from me." *(Sahih Bukhari, Kitab al-Nikah, Bab Targhib Fil Nikah)*

Once when the Holy Prophet[sa] went to the *masjid*, he saw a rope suspended there. On asking someone said, "This is Hadrat Zaynab's rope. When she gets tired while praying, she uses this rope to support her." The Holy Prophet[sa] said to untie the rope and said, "We should pray when we are fresh and rest when we are tired." *(Sahih Bukhari, Kitab al-Tahajud, Bab ma yakrahu minaaaashdid fil 'ibadah)*

There is an abundance of customs associated with every event in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. Other countries also have customs, but not to the degree our society is shackled by these customs and traditions. The followers of the Holy Prophet[saw] have also embraced these customs

under the influence of the Hindu society and made their lives miserable.

Happiness and sorrow, both are part of human lives. It is obvious to express sentiments of happiness, symphony, vibrancy and excitement on a happy occasion, and sentiments of sobriety, dignity and patience on occasions of grief. It is a basic attribute of a believer to sing songs of praise of the Lord on happy occasions and be content with God at the time of grief.

Shariah is a source of mercy for us. The methods Allah the Exalted has told us to live our lives are plain and simple and it is very easy to act upon them. But it is engrained in human beings to overburden themselves with things that are not prescribed by the *Shariah*. So the dangerous concept of priesthood found in the Christians was concocted by them. Allah the Exalted expressed His displeasure with it and said that He did not ordain it. It was invented by them. The true faith has ordained us to marry and did not prescribe any other burden besides it. Entering into a *Nikah* is a tradition of the Holy Prophet[saw], which is very clear, but people in our society have invented so many customs associated with it which were not prescribed for us. Similarly at the time of someone's passing away, the true faith instructs us to observe respect and honor of the deceased person and express our sympathies for three days with their families. But our society has overburdened everyone by associating the customs of *Kul, Soum, Chehlum, Fatiha Khawani* and many others with the passing away of people.

Human beings always need a model to follow. Therefore, Allah the Exalted made the Holy Prophet[saw] the best model for human beings. People associated with every walk of life could benefit from him.

Allah the Exalted has described the basic principles for all human beings to lead their lives. The Holy Prophet[saw] established a perfect model for us by leading his life following these principles. One could easily conclude from the Islamic teachings that Allah the Exalted prescribed principles for the guidance of human beings of every age. People of today's advanced age could also benefit from these teachings as people 1400 years ago benefited from them. Anyone who adopts a different way instead of following these principles should keep the following sayings of the Holy Qur'an in mind:

فَذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمُ الْحَقُّ ۚ فَمَاذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلٰلُ ۖ فَأَنّٰى تُصْرَفُوْنَ ۝

Such is Allah, your true Lord. So what *would you have* after *discarding* the truth except errpr? How then are you being turned away *from the truth*? (Yunas, 10:33)

If the thought crosses someone's mind that the ways of our elders were not wrong, and we consider legitimate a number of things that are not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, we should remember that all the religious needs have been discussed in the Holy Qur'an. Allah the Exalted says in the Holy Qur'an,

وَمَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طٰٓئِرٍ يَّطِيْرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّآ أُمَمٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ ۭ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتٰبِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُوْنَ ۝

There is not an animal *that crawls* in the earth, nor a bird that flies on its two wings, but they are communities like you. We have left out nothing in the Book. Then to their Lord shall they be gathered together. (Al-An'am, 6: 39)

In addition, Allah has described one basic principle:

يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْٓا أَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَأَطِيْعُوا الرَّسُوْلَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ۚ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِيْ شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوْهُ إِلَى اللّٰهِ وَالرَّسُوْلِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَّأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيْلًا ۝

O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey *His* Messenger and those who are authority among you. And if you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and *His* Messenger if you are believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is best and most commendable in the end. (Chapter al-Nisa, 4: 60)

The past saints commenting on this verse said that the word "Allah" refers to Allah's book in this verse and the word "Messenger" refers to the practice

of the Holy Prophet[saw]

At another place, it is said:

وَاَنَّ هٰذَا صِرَاطِيْ مُسْتَقِيْمًا فَاتَّبِعُوْهُ ۚ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ ۭ ذٰلِكُمْ وَصّٰىكُمْ بِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ۝

And *say*, 'This is my path *leading* straight. So follow it; ad follow not *other* ways, lest they lead you away from His way. That is what He enjoins upon you, that you may *become able to* guard *against evils*.' (Al-An'am, 6: 154)

Allah the Exalted discussing one of the principle attributes of the believers says:

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُوْنَ ۝

And who shun all that which is vain. (Al-Mu'minun, 23: 4)

The Holy Prophet[saw] said, "The most truthful teaching is described in the book of Allah the Exalted and the best guidance is contained in the practice of Muhammad and the worst thing is to add anything to my practice because every new thing (religious invention) is a bad practice and every new practice is misguidance and every misguidance ultimately leads to the hell. "(Sunan Nasai, Kitab as-Salatul Eidain bab kaifal khutbah)"

Once the Holy Prophet[saw] said that Allah has greatest enmity with three people and one of them is the one who in spite of being a Muslim likes to follow traditions of ignorance. *(Bukhari, Kitabud Diyyaat bab man talab dam amrai bighairi haq)*

Once the Holy Prophet[sa] said, "Any conflicting innovation added by anyone to our *shariat* should be rejected." (Bukhari, Kitabus Sulah)

The Holy Prophet[sa] said at the time of *Hajjatul Wida'*:

"Listen! Satan is apprehensive if he would ever be worshipped in this town of yours. However it pleases him when you follow him in lesser acts." *(Sunan Ibn Maja, Kitabul Manasik, Bab al-Khutba Youm al-Nahr)*

The Holy Prophet[saw] also said during the *Hajjatul Wida'* sermon,

"Listen! Many will be saved (from the hell because of my intercession), but there are such people who would be dissociated from me. I would say, 'Oh God, they are my companions!' But Allah would say, 'You are unaware of the new practices (religious innovations) started by them after you." (*Sunan Ibn Maja, Kitabul Manasik, Bab al-Khutba Youm al-Nahr)*

Once a few people from the *Mazar* tribe appeared before the Holy Prophet[saw] wearing tattered clothes. Seeing their condition of such desperation agitated the face of the Holy Prophet[saw]. The Holy Prophet[saw] went to his house and then came back. He asked Hadrat Bilal[ra] to call the *Adhan* and say *Iqamah* and then led the prayers. Thereafter, the Holy Prophet[saw] delivered an address. He recited a few verses of the Holy Quran and said, "Everyone should give alms out of his *dinars, dirhams*, clothes, wheat and dates, even if it is part of a date." The narrators say that the companions passionately followed this exhortation and one pile of clothes, and another one of food items was gathered there. The face of the Holy Prophet[saw] was so lit up as if it was made of gold. Thereafter, the Holy Prophet[saw] said:

Translation: Whosoever initiates a good tradition in Islam, in addition to getting the reward for his deed, he will also get a portion from the reward of those people who act upon it without reducing their rewards. And whosoever initiates a bad tradition in Islam, in addition to his own sin, he will also get a portion from the sins of those people who act upon it without reducing their sins. *(Muslim, Kitab al -Zakat bab ... alas-Sadaqa)*

The above mentioned verses of the *Holy Quran* and the *Ahadith* of the Holy Prophet[saw] prove that starting any new practice in the religion against the instructions of Allah or His Messenger[saw] or the basic principles prescribed by them is considered a great sin. The true religion is the only religion which has been perfected from every angle by Allah the Exalted and it will live till the Day of Judgment. Human needs evolve with their progress. Any religion which does not provide guidance for the changing needs of time is a stagnant and inert religion and cannot be considered alive. A hallmark of a living religion is that it guides people

through the changing times. Allah has perfected the true faith in the sense that people of all times could draw guidance from it. The true faith did not restrict itself to the prescription of few laws; rather it laid down the basic principles which could be used as a yardstick to evaluate anything.

The hollow traditions practiced among us relate to all sections of the society and all walks of life. There are traditions related to the time of birth, death, worship, celebrations of non-religious days and the traditions related to weddings.

In this article, I am presenting basic sayings related to the traditions found in our society associated with marriages and weddings.

Only *Taqwa* (Fear of God's Displeasure) Should be Considered at the Time of Looking for a Match

Hadhrat Aqdas Promised Messiah[as] says,

"We also have this bad practice that we do not like to wed our daughters to outsiders, and also to the extent possible we resist accepting girls from the outsiders. This is pure arrogance and pride in clear defiance of the instructions of *Shariah*. The entire human race is a creation of Allah the Exalted. At the time of match finding the consideration should be that the man to be married to is auspicious and good natured and is not inflicted with any affliction that could become a source of a trial. It should be remembered that in the true faith there is no significance of ethnicity, only *taqwa* and auspiciousness is considered. Allah the Exalted says,

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

Verily, the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. (49:14)

(Fatawa Ahmad, p.8, cited by Fatawa Hadhrat Promised Messiah[as], pp. 144, 145)

Not to Wed Daughters with the People Already Having a Wife

Hadhrat Promised Messiah[as] says:

When some of the ignorant Muslims find out at the time of match finding that someone already has a wife, they absolutely do not want to wed their girls to such people. It should be remembered that these people are also Muslims only by name. In a way, they are supporters of those women who get upset with the second *Nikahs* of their husbands. So, they should also fear God.(*Fatawa Ahmadiyya, Volume 2, pp. 8-9, With reference to Fatawa Hadhrat Promised Messiah[as], p. 145)*

Engagement

Hadhrat Aqdas Promised Messiah[as] says,

The purpose of engagement is to find out all the good and the bad things during this time period. Engagement is not a *Nikah*, therefore it is not a sin to break an engagement. (Malfoo-zat, vol. 5, p. 231)

Distribution of Sweets on Engagement

Hadhrat Aqdas Promised Messiah[as] says,

The purpose of distribution of sweets at the time of engagement is to make it known to others so there is no snag in it. But now the real purpose has died and it has been replaced merely by a tradition and many innovations have been added to it as well. So these matters should not be considered a tradition, rather these are mandatory matters to legitimize the matches. Always remember that *Shariah* never opposes matters that are beneficial to the creation because *Shariah's* own objective is to benefit the creation.(Malfoozat, vol 2, pp. 310)

Mehndi or *Henna* Ceremony

The rapidly expanding customs associated with the weddings are being celebrated with great preparations. *Henna* appears to be a separate function from the wedding function. At the time of *henna,* a separate invitation is sent to guests which is called henna party or the *ronak* party. The organizers by naming this function *henna* appear to acknowledge that it is a separate function. Extravagant spending takes place in it in order to make it colorful. Girls wear expensive yellow outfits and boys wear yellow scarves. The venues are usually decorated with real and incarnation flowers of yellow color. A formal stage is set up and thousands of rupees are spent on it. Yellow lights are used to light up the surroundings. The bride is made to sit down in this setting and *henna is* decorated on a

napkin placed on her hand and this event is video recorded. This is entirely a superficial act. Sometimes, *dholak* (type of a drum) is played with songs and dances and *bhangra* is also performed. On this occasion, there is a *mini-barat* (a small convoy) that comes with the groom. *Henna* ceremony has started to acquire the form of a function separate from the wedding.

Invitation of Henna Ceremony with the Wedding Invitation

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[ra] expressed great displeasure in his letter that he wrote on March 25, 1998 in response to an invitation for *henna* ceremony that he received with a wedding card.

He said,

"You sent me an invitation for the wedding ceremony of your daughter. But so daringly you also sent me the invitation for *henna* ceremony along with it. This ceremony is totally against the tradition of the *Jama'at* and I have given clear guidance that these events should not be celebrated as a custom. There is no harm if few friends and sisters informally get together in the house. This is my clear guidance. You not only openly violated my guidance but also sent me the invitation to the ceremony. May Allah grant you sense!" *(Monthly Misbah, July/August 2009, pp. 24,25)*

Custom of Henna

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] says, "There is no harm if friends of the girl get together and rejoice as long as it is limited to a natural expression of happiness. But if it turns into a custom where the groom side must bring *henna,* then it contains an element of show. The *henna* for the girl should be prepared at home. The custom of the *mini-barat* from the groom side creates issues. At the occasion of *henna* when bringing a formal delegation from the groom side and the serving of traditional food becomes a custom, it burdens the society. *(Al-Fazl, June 26th, 2002, p.4)*

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] says,

The custom of *henna* has become as important as the wedding. Banquets are held on this occasion and invitation cards are printed. Stages are set up. It is not limited to these things; rather the banquets continue for many days and start before the wedding. Sometimes, they start weeks before. There is a new stage set up every day. The number of dishes served each day is also talked about. All these customs have also clutched those who do not have means and as a result these people are overburdened by debt. Non-Ahmadis always indulged in these customs, but now certain Ahmadi families have started to vie with others in following these useless and absurd customs or at least certain families have indulged in it. Instead of listening to the advice of the *Imam* of the time and shunning these customs, they are following the society and getting increasingly shackled by these customs.

A few months ago I advised to stay away from exorbitant spending on these customs and stop having lavish banquets. There was a banquet planned here in London in an Ahmadi family. When they heard my sermon, they cancelled the program and invited only a few friends of the girl and fed them food and sent the remaining food for a function that was going on in Baitul Fatuh. These are the Ahmadis who listen when I draw their attention to something and they also send letters of apologies.

I have received a few complaints from Pakistan and Rabwah too. Some people have exceedingly started following these customs. As Rabwah is a small city, therefore everything is readily noticed. Therefore, I am clearly advising to stay away from these useless and absurd customs and stop following them. *(Daily Al-Fazl, March 2nd, 2010)*

Demands at the Time of Wedding

Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] repeatedly advised the *Jama'at* not to make demands at the time of weddings. On March 27, 1931, while delivering a *Nikah* sermon, he said, "I want to state that whatever forms customs adopt, they are still bad. I am saddened to say that where our *Jama'at* got rid of certain customs, it also adopted some. Before, it used to be decided in the house before the *Nikah* the amount of jewelry and the number of outfits to be taken. Slowly it started to take place in writing. Then people started presenting them to me. *Shariah* has only obligated *haq mehar* (dowry money). Any demand of outfits or jewelry by the girl side on

top of the dowry money is shameful and has no meanings other than selling your daughter... I announce it for future that if I find out that conditions of jewelry or outfits have been set in any *Nikah*, or the girl side has made any such demands, I will not make the announcement of such a *Nikah*." *(Al-Fazl, April 7, 1931)*

At another place he said,

"Sometimes such inappropriate demands are made and such absurd conditions are set that baffles the mind. For instance some people set conditions for the dowry to be supplied by the bridal side. They will marry only if certain things will be given. This is entirely absurd. I have been drawing attention of the *Jama'at* towards it for years to reform them. If the people of the *Jama'at* pay attention towards it, reformation could be done very quickly. If they make pledge not to attend any such wedding where the two sides have set such conditions among them, people will start feeling guilty in a short time and will abstain from such repulsive acts. What could be more degrading that girls are sold like animals and people progressively bid for them in marketplaces. Our *Jama'at* should refrain from such acts and pledge not to attend any such wedding even if it is of their real sister or brother." *(Al-Fazl, April 18th, 1947)*

Dowry from the Bride Side

Once someone came to Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I[ra] and said that he was a *Sayyed* and his daughter was getting married, and if he could help him out. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I[ra] said, "I am ready to give you everything that was given by the Holy Prophet[saw] to his daughter, Fatimah." Hearing this he involuntarily said, "This will be degrading for me." Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I[ra] said, "Your pride is greater than the pride of the Holy Prophet[saw]. Your pride is in being a *Sayyed*. If this much dowry was not degrading for the Holy Prophet[saw], how could it be degrading for you?" *(Hayat-e-Noor, p.530)*

Display of the Items of Dowry from Both Sides

Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] announcing a *Nikah* on February 9, 1921 said, "There is a tradition among people to display the dowry. We should discontinue this tradition. When people display, then people also ask about it. When the tradition to display will be abandoned, people will stop asking too. (Al -Fazl, February 17, 1921)

Show-off on Weddings

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] says, "Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] is saying that you should also make a solemn pledge with me not to follow the un-Islamic customs that people have added to their faith because of the influence of the society in which they live. These customs have been adopted from other religions. For example, there are some frivolous customs during celebrations of marriage—like showing off the dowry given to the bride by her groom's family, or the gifts brought by them, or publicly displaying the dowry given to the bride by her own family. There is quite a show. Islam only enjoins *haq mehr* to be publicly announced as a part of the religious marriage ceremony. All other customs are frivolous. First, when showing-off the dowry from either side, those who are well-off want to show that they are giving more than their counterparts did in their marriage. All of this is worldly competition and show. These days, there are many among you whom Allah the Almighty has blessed greatly after migration. This is one of the blessings of joining the *Jama'at* of the Promised Messiah[as]. It is a consequence of the sacrifices made by your forefathers and a blessing resulting from the supplications offered by them. But there are some who, instead of being thankful by bowing before Allah the Almighty and spending in His way, become a prey to self-exultation and demonstration by excessive spending in marriages. A lot of food is wasted in marriage celebrations and *walimahs* [reception given by husband after the marriage has been consummated]. Many dishes are prepared for public display. As a consequence, those who are not so well -off go into debt in order to have bridal dowry to display publicly. Some parents have to go into debt for fear of criticisms from their in-laws that their daughter has not brought much dowry with her. The groom's family should fear Allah. Do not permit your poor in-laws to go into debt in order to maintain your own false sense of self-esteem." *(Conditions of Bai'at and the Duties of an Ahmadi, p.92, 93)*

Giving Dowry from Both Sides

Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] says, "There is no doubt that the custom of dowry from both sides is very bad. Therefore these customs should be reformed as quickly as possible and I fully endorse Mir Sahib in this regard. Such an epidemic and affliction that threatens to destroy households deserves to be fully eradicated right away. I have seen that really good households are badly inflicted with it. I do not feel any embarrassment to admit that women of our own household also care about it and I have heard such words that something has to be given. Usually people overlook their own financial condition. There is no doubt about it that not only the dowry from the bride side, but also from the groom side is a bad thing. It may be possible to establish precedence for the giving of dowry according to one's capacity (from historic evidence), however I could not find any reference of the bridal dowry the way it is established today. But it does not mean that even if one is capable, still one should not give any dowry to the girl. For these matters we should follow the practice of the Masih Mau'ood[as]. The Holy Qur'an comes foremost and it is permissible to consult the *Hadith* for the matters where the *Holy Quran* is quiet. **(Aurhni Walion Key Liyay Phool, p. 240,241)**

Wastage of Hundreds of Rupees on Weddings

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] says in one of his sermons,

"Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] once said that our nation is inflicted with this bad custom to waste hundreds of rupees on weddings." *(Majmu'a Ishtiharat, vol.1, pp.70)*

Hundred of years ago or more, spending of hundreds of rupees was considered a big amount. But these days it has reached hundreds of thousands of rupees and people spend more than their capacities which is perhaps more than hundreds of rupees (in value) compared to that time. He also said that fireworks are *haram* (forbidden by religion). (Malfuzat, vol. 5, pp. 49, latest edition)

Fireworks are done on weddings. Now people also use decorative lighting on their houses and overdo it. On one side this news is spread everywhere in Pakistan and everyone who comes from Pakistan tells me that there is a huge shortage of power in Pakistan and load shedding is done for multiple hours and increasing prices have broken the backbone of people. On the other side, some of the houses by overspending are not only damaging the country but also incurring sin. Therefore, all Ahmadis should be mindful of not overspending and this should be particularly observed in Rabwah. In Rabwah it is the responsibility of the *Sadr Umoomi* to monitor that overspending, showing-off of wealth or grandeur is not taking place. By the special grace of God Almighty, the *Jama'at* is generally free from the customs observed at the time of death. For example, *satwan, daswan* and *chaliswan* are practiced in non-Ahmadis but Ahmadis do not observe them. These customs more than often become a burden for the households. But if under the influence of the society we indulge in one type of bad customs, then the other type will also creep into us and we may start seeing their practice too. *(Al-Fazl, March 2nd, 2010)*

Our Responsibility to Obey Laws of the Country

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] says,

"Every Ahmadi should know that it is only because of the favors of Allah the Exalted that He enabled us to be part of the community of the Promised Messiah[as]. Now it is every Ahmadi's duty to observe the true Islamic teachings. One of the duties mandated according to the Islamic teachings is to get married. A function could be arranged for it and if one has capacity, he could arrange food as well. It is not essential that every guest has to be included in every *barat* and they should be fed. If the *barat* is coming from a long distance, only people of the *barat* could be fed. But if the state law prohibits food, then it should be observed and only your own household people or a few people from the *barat* should be fed. At one time there was a restriction in Pakistan. I do not know the current situation, but a certain restriction still exists." (Daily Al-Fazl, March 2nd, 2010)

Announcement with *Duff*

"Anything that is bad is *haram* (unlawful by religion) and the good things are *tayyab* (pure). Allah the Exalted does not declare any good thing *haram*, rather all good things are *halal* (permissible). When bad and unclean things are mixed with good things, then they turn into *haram* things. Announcing marriage with a *duff* (a kind of drum) is permissible; however if dance is included with it then it becomes *haram* (prohibited). If we stay within the course mentioned by the Holy Prophet[saw] then it is legitimate." (Malfoozat, vol. 5, pp.354/355)

Playing *Dholak* (a Kind of a Drum)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] answering a question of a woman says,

"You can play as much *dholak* as you like in a wedding, it is not forbidden. You can also sing, as there has to be a difference between a happy occasion and a sad one. But do not follow prohibited customs on these occasions. Even if the disallowed customs appear to be harmless, still do not follow them as they will burden the society and cause issues. However, as long as the expression of happiness remains within the bounds permitted by the true faith, it should not be stopped. When the Holy Prophet[saw] migrated to Medina, the girls there were beating *duff*, which is a kind of drum and were also singing songs. Hadhrat Muhammad[saw] did not stop them, rather he liked it. There were men present with the Holy Prophet[saw] and they also heard it.

A virtuous song sung by a woman which does not cause any evil is not prohibited by God. If listening to voice of women is prohibited, then men's voice should also be prohibited as it would create desire in the heart of women... *Dholak* is a separate thing. However, if such songs are sung with *dholak* that do not cause any evil in the society, then it is permissible. However calling names and is counted among evils. Do not follow them. General songs with light-hearted satire are songs of affection. They may also include jokes, and such songs are allowed. These should not include filthy language or absurdities." (Majlis-e-Irfan, published by Lajna Ima'ullah, Karachi, pp.134)

The Trend of Inobservance of *Purdah* on Weddings

Hadhrat Khalifatul IV[rh] says,

"The bad practices taking root include immodest outfits which is approaching the bounds of the violation of the rules of *Shariat* and it also exposes the insensitiveness of the matrimonial households because included in the respected guests are many modest and *purdah* observant ladies. Without any concern photographers or irresponsible men or people who are not part of the household are called in to take pictures not caring that the gathering is not restricted to the close circles of the family members. People should be repeatedly advised about this that if they want to make a video of the people included in their inner circle, guests should be forewarned and these desires should be fulfilled in a limited circle of family. (Al-Fazl, June 26th, 2002, pp.4)

Purdah from the Groom

Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] says,

"The ladies of the neighborhood do not consider it necessary to observe *purdah* from the groom when he arrives irrespective of the fact that he might be an outsider. They not only refuse to observe *purdah* from him, but also jest at him and tease him."(Khutbat-e-Mahmud, vol.3, p.71)

Squandering of Money like Blowing Away Dust

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] says,

"There are many rich people who perform such acts on weddings which are disdainful and deserve our mercy. They want to copy and repeat all the absurdities that the Promised Messiah[as] drove us out from while driving us into light. I have heard that some of them even invite bands. This is absurd and is squandering away of money like blowing away dust. They have no value of money and do not think that certain uses of money are not considered beneficial by the *Holy Qur'an*, rather they are actually harmful. These people who waste their means like this on the celebration of weddings are called brothers of Satan. Whether

someone could find the grounds to fault them or not, but their tendencies clearly speak out that they have drifted away from the Ahmadiyya bounds and are entering into the bounds of worldly people. If you remind them now they get upset and question you as to who you are and why you are asking them and reminding them about rules. They then question the system of the *Jama'at.* Whether they say these things or not, this is what is in their heart. 'Who are you to stop us? Let us do what we want to do. You think we have made our own world. Why are you jealous? You should be grateful that Allah did not make this world for you.' At the most, they have this right upon us that we explain it to them and advise them to fear God, not to waste money, and not to introduce innovations." (Daily Al-Fazl, July 19th, 2002)

Difference in Observances of Wedding and Funeral

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rha] says,

"We have great morals. We should celebrate our happy occasions within the bounds of simplicity and controlled expense. There has to be a difference in the observances at the time of happy occasions and funerals. It should not be like this that people cannot tell why the tents are erected, is it a wedding or a funeral? Happiness expresses itself. It has a harmony in it. People could hear it and notice it. It has a color and a smell. The same things take a different hue at the time of grief. They turn into moans. This distinction has to be kept in the society." (Daily Al-Fazl, July 19, 2002)

Dances and Songs in the Weddings

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُوْنَ ۙ

And who shun all that which is vain. *(Surah Al-Mu'minun, 23: 4)*

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّشْتَرِيْ لَهْوَ الْحَدِيْثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۖ وَّ يَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ۝

And of men is he who takes idle tales in exchange for guidance to lead men astray from the path of Allah, without knowledge, and to make fun of it. For such there will be humiliating punishment. *(Surah Luqman, 31:7)*

Hadhrat Promised Messiah[as] says,

"Announcing a marriage with a *duff* is allowed, however adding dance to it makes it unlawful." *(Malfoozat, vol.5, pp.355)*

Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] says, "Singing a song at the time of wedding is not a sin provided that it is free of profanity and vulgarity and is not sung with lewdness." *(Al-Fazl, , July 20th, 1915, pp. 12)*

He further says, "There is no doubt that *Shariah* allows to sing songs at the time of weddings. But the song should either be religious or it should be harmless. For instance the common satirical songs that are sung during weddings are completely harmless and there is nothing wrong in singing them because they are sung purely for the pleasure of the heart and have no bad impact on the conduct of people." (Al-Fazl, January 20th, 1945)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] says, "Dancing of women among women is also harmful...As far as songs are concerned, there is no harm for girls in singing decent wedding songs." *(Khutbat-e-Masroor, vol.2, p.94)*

He further says, "I warn you to stay away from these vulgarities and useless things. Sometimes dances are performed during the parties on the girl's side, or sometimes after the wedding when the girl goes to the boy's house. These dances are performed with such lewd music and vulgar songs and sometimes the relatives also take part in it which cannot be allowed under any circumstances...Some people after seeing off guests hold a separate program with their special guests where the same vulgarities and hysteria continues. Separate dances are performed in the house. Even if only girls are dancing among girls or boys are dancing with boys, the vulgar songs or the music they are dancing on cannot be tolerated at all." *(Khutbat-e-Masroor, vol.3, p.686 to 688)*

(Daily Al-Fazl, March 26, 2010)

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SUPPORT HUMANITY FIRST

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FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS

Laila Isack

During these trying times inflicted by the falling economy, I especially remember the power Allah the Almighty possesses over all things, including financial means. The power to pick man up from his fall. I emphasize my thoughts on the concept of paying the *Zakat, Chandas, Lajna* dues, and the brilliant option of becoming a *Moosi* (one who has pledged a sacrifice of 10% of their wealth to the beautiful faith of Islam). I especially focus on the latter of the group, for that to me appears to be the greater of financial sacrifices, and exceptionally glorified in the eyes of the Most Gracious.

It is a mercy and grace from our Lord that He has bestowed the ability upon us to invest our money in receiving *Allah Ta'ala's* love in this world and in the next. In the hardships inflicted by struggling times, I call to mind the day when no amount of money will be accepted as a payment to save one from the fiery flames of hell. I think of the money I have now, and though it may be small at times, to spend it in the cause of *Allah Ta'ala* is an honor. I remember His ability to manifold it in greater amounts than its original sum. When spending money in the cause of *Allah Ta'ala*, you multiply it, not only with rewards in this world, but more importantly, in the Hereafter.

"Surely, those who believe and do good deeds, and observe Prayer and pay the Zakat, shall have their ***reward*** *from their Lord, and no fear shall come on them, nor shall they grieve." 2:278*

Allah Ta'ala says,

"And it is not your riches nor your children that will bring you near Us in rank, but those who believe and do good works, will have a ***double reward*** *for what they did. And in lofty mansions will they be secure." (34:38)*

So not only can you use your money to invest in the Garden of Eternity by giving to the poor and the needy, and the orphans, and the kindred, but most importantly by displaying acts of kindness, and visiting the poor when they are sick, and spreading words of peace in time of war, and taking in the orphan's who are homeless. *Allah Ta'ala* promises a greater reward than that which you give.

Chapter 73 verse 21 reads, *"Recite, then, as much of the Qur'an as is easy for you. He knows that there will be some among you who may be sick and others who may travel in the land seeking Allah's bounty, and others who may fight in the cause of Allah. So recite of it that which is easy for you, and observe Prayer, and pay the Zakat, and lend to Allah a goodly loan. And whatever good you send on before you for your souls, you will find it with Allah. It will be better and* ***greater*** *in* ***reward****. And seek forgiveness of Allah. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful."*

The essence of our souls are pure, and it is only worldly corruptions that taint the inner spirit. The importance of strengthening one's faith in a time of hardship is extremely important. It is during hardship that a man is tested by God to see if he truly believes, and to insure he will not turn back on his faith in uncomfortable circumstances. One may find temptations to sin more prevalent during hard times. You often see crime result as the aftermath of hardship, but I believe, instead, personal growth should come of hardship. A soul's heart, full of love and compassion for mankind, should grow like the seeds of a flower beneath the dirt that sprout into a magnificent rose; and none can cause life to grow save Allah, The Creator.

We are all different and not one knows another man's burden—save Allah The All-Knowing. One man's burden is not another man's, in *Al Fatir Cpt. 35 Vs.19,*

The Holy Qur'an says, *"And no* ***burdened soul*** *can bear the burden of another..."*

No man honestly knows what another man is going through, and no man can take that hardship away from him, unless Allah The Bountiful wills it. One of my favorite poems is Desiderata, by an unknown author, and one of the lines in it is "If you compare yourself with others you may become vain or bitter, for

always there are greater and lesser persons than yourself." We should never compare our hardships with others because always there will be people who seem to have less hardship, and others that seem to have more, but if *"Allah burdens not any soul beyond its capacity,"* then all of us are strong enough to endure the hardship given to us with patience. We are strong enough to strengthen our faith in Allah the Provider.

Helen Keller, a triumphant woman born deaf and blind once said, "We can decide to let our trials crush us, or we can convert them to new forces of good." Whenever we suffer a trailing hardship, I pray that mankind remains steadfast and find comfort in the Lord of the Worlds knowing,

"Truly there is ease after hardship". *(Surah Al-Inshira vs. 94.)*

The saying "what doesn't kill you only makes you stronger," is true if you choose to take that hardship and remain loyal to your Lord, you will be provided with a stronger faith. In *Al-Baqarah,* verse 287, it is written,

"Allah burdens not any ***soul*** *beyond its capacity. It shall have the reward it earns, and it shall get the punishment it incurs. "*

No matter what hardship we are given, we cannot surrender our submission to *Allah Ta'ala* for a paltry price. I find beauty in hardship because if everything was always perfect, what reason would you have to be upset. Without sorrow how can one appreciate happiness? And without hardship, we cannot appreciate ease. If all was exactly what man wanted, what test would that be? And often times if we focus on our lives, we find that what we want is not always good for us; and Allah the Merciful wants only what is best for His creation. Remember during the financial and other hardships to hold fast to the rope of *Allah Ta'ala* through prayers and financial sacrifices. All praise belongs to the Most Caring, the Most Loving, the Greatest, One and Only God – Allah!

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HADITH

Hadhrat Jarir bin Abdullah[ra] relates:

"We were sitting with the Holy Prophet[saw] when he looked at the moon which was the 14th night's moon and said, 'You will surely behold your Lord as you are beholding this full moon without anything blocking your view. Therefore, if you want it then do not neglect the Prayer before sunrise and the Prayer before sunset, if you can.' "

(Bukhari kitabuttauhid warrad 'alal jahmiyyah bab qaulallah wajuh yauma'idhin nadirah ila-rabbiha nazirah)

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Muslim for Peace Campaign

Zahir M. Mannan

Secretary *Tabligh*
Connecticut Chapter

As part of the nationwide "**Muslims for Peace**" **campaign** sponsored by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA, a handful of Connecticut dwelling Muslim Americans who believe in the Promised Messiah, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian[as], embarked upon another intellectual outreach to inform their fellow Americans about the true, peaceful nature of Islam. On February 26, 2011, five Ahmadi Muslims set out for Waterbury, CT after a brief meeting, *Waqar-e-Amal* (volunteer services), and *Salat* at Baitul Aman Mosque in Meriden, CT. Efforts were focused on African-American neighborhoods in recognition of "Black History Month". Groups were formed for the dissemination of two popular brochures: the "**Muslims for Peace**" and "**Muslims for Loyalty**" **fliers**.

One group went door-to-door in a residential neighborhood and the other visited local stores and businesses. After an hour, they redirected their spiritual venture downtown. A total of 260 fliers were distributed - 130 of each brochure. The enthusiastic drive was received with thanks, smiles, exchange of contact information and, on occasion, healthy discussions.

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TABLIGH EVENT REPORT: North Jersey Jama'at

Dr. Kashif Chaudhary

Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association North Jersey, Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya North Jersey, organized a community outreach event Sunday, 27th February, 2011. Elders and children also joined in the *Tabligh* event. Thirty members of the community met at the Baitul Wahid mosque in Clifton, NJ at 12:30 pm on the event day for *Zuhr* and *Asr* Prayers. The President of North Jersey *Jama't,* Hafiz Samiullah Chaudhy Sahib was out of the country. Prayers were, therefore, led by the Acting President of North Jersey *Jama'at,* Karimullah Zirvi Sahib.

Members drove to the Main St/Market St intersection in Paterson which is about 10 minutes from the mosque. Members took positions on all street corners at the busy intersection and also spread to adjacent blocks. We had planned to distribute over a thousand fliers in a hour and half. As soon as we started distributing the 'Muslims for Peace' fliers, we were met by reporters from 'The Bergen Record' and 'Jewish Standard'.

Mr. Amir Khokhar, *Tabligh* Secretary was interviewed by both reporters. So were youth members Anwar Muhammad and Kashif Chaudhry, President Youth Association AMC North Jersey. A cameraman from ABC-7 was also present but only shot clips while we were distributing the fliers.

Mr. Waseem Mehmood had brought a 'Muslims for Peace' banner with him which was pretty conspicuous at the main intersection. Everyone gave it a glance as his two small daughters competed to hand out fliers to passers-by. Volunteers also interacted with Paterson residents. Many were glad to know that Islam is a religion of Peace and that not only is terrorism not a teaching of Islam, it is also highly condemned in all forms. Almost 6 out of 10 people received our message. There were smiles all over in Paterson and it appeared as if Peace has suddenly taken over the busy intersection.

Many people praised the work being done to promote peace. One passer-by looked at the 'Muslim for Peace' banner and gave us a big thumbs-up from the other end of the street. Another person we interacted with said true peace was here, pointing to our fliers. A middle-aged Catholic man said the true terrorists were those who would stop this message in this country and abroad. At 3:00 pm we left for the mosque and dispersed back home. We distributed around 1300 fliers (a conservative estimate). The Bergen Record has covered the story here:

http://www.northjersey.com/community/
religion/022711_Muslim_group_spreads_message_of_love_acceptance_in_Paterson.html

It appeared in the newspapers. MKA North Jersey had written to Beloved Hazoor prior to the event. His prayers helped us all along. Mr Waseem Sayed Sahib and the National Media team headed by Dr Nasim Rehmatullah Sahib and Ms Saima Sheikh and Ms Durre Samin Sahiba did wonders by sending media advisories to all major media contacts in the area. *JazakAllah Ahsanal Jazaa.*

Pictures of the event can be found at - https://picasaweb.google.com/115940572769038847423/MuslimsForPeaceNorthJersey?authkey=Gv1sRgCJnP4sv4yojYFQ&feat=directlink

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ALAM-E-IN'AMI

Suhail Kausar, Zaeem Ansarullah Dallas

Majlis Ansarullah Dallas has the distinctive honor of being blessed with *Alame Ina'ami* for six of the last seven years. This is an experience, which not only brings happiness and excitement, but makes us bow our heads before God Almighty in gratification and acts as an inspiration and motivation for consistent strides to please our God as well. It is worthwhile to share the experience and strategy to achieve this honor. National *Ansarullah Amila* has been doing an excellent job of devising the annual plan by translating all the objectives into measurable goals, which makes the job of *Zo'ma* much more focused and result oriented. All the directives and commands delivered by *Hazoor* form the basis in developing the 'work to do' list and proportionate weight is attached by smart goals to prioritize the required actions. Therefore, *Zo'ma* can plan the coarse of their respective actions and focus on their implementations. The *Zaeem* is supposed to lead his respective *Majlis* by example and has to initiate the exhortations by leading from the front. This is an important factor in order to motivate and inspire the members to join him in the execution of the plans. This in a way is also an opportunity and blessing for him to reform and improve his own level of righteousness and the best way to thank God, is to inspire all the members, the *Zaeem* has been assigned to lead. Desired results cannot be achieved without the cooperation and support of the *Amila* as well as all the members of the *Majlis*. To attain that goal, the Zaeem must develop an atmosphere of loving brotherhood amongst the members and should have a compassionate relationship with all. This is the teaching that we have learned from our beloved Holy Prophet[saw], Promised Messiah[as] and the *Khulafa* and this is the only way to success. One of the major responsibilities of the *Zaeem* is to activate all those brothers, who are not so regular in their participation of various desired activities. He must be in constant touch with them with passion and perseverance. He should be an optimist. Optimism is a vital requirement for achieving the given objectives, as has been demonstrated by all the Prophets of God. They carried on with their Divine job against all odds and opposition, but with firm belief and conviction that their God would surely reward them with success. *Zaeem* should try to motivate all the members to excel in every department consistently, which includes *Tabligh, Tarbiyyat,* Social services and others.

Tabligh efforts: One of the most important activities to be carried out is that of *Tabligh* in light of the directives of Hazoor and plan prepared by *Majlis Ansarullah* USA.

Flier Distribution: An organized and coordinated program is followed for distribution of fliers to various residential subdivisions. Street maps have been prepared and constantly updated to ensure that the distribution work should continue to cover maximum target areas. In addition to this, special programs are planned and implemented by going to various downtown areas for distribution of fliers. These programs have been a great success, as many people have responded positively and appreciated our efforts to reach out for spreading the message of peace, although few have refused to receive them. Some of them have even asked to be contacted for any interfaith program we might arrange.

Interfaith Meetings: Dallas *Ansar* members attend interfaith meetings twice a month regularly, which is organized by a Jewish family and attended by people belonging to different faith groups. The format is quite informal in which a specific issue and subject is presented and discussed by all the participants. This is an excellent platform in which our members develop relationship with people of other faiths and get the experience of confronting various *Tabligh* related questions. There were two interfaith conferences arranged by the Dallas *Jama'at*, in which Ansar members took an active part to make them productive. Various neighborhood residents and public officials were approached to encourage their participation in the conferences.

Visit to Small Towns: Regular visits are made to churches in identified small towns to develop relationship with their members and Pastors in order to encourage them for arranging interfaith meetings.

Daeen Illallah Class: Regular classes of *Daeen Illallah* are held every month before the monthly meetings to educate and equip the members with relevant religious knowledge required for *Tabligh*. Various topics are picked up from *Majlis Irfan* of Hashrat Khafiatul Masih IV[rh], which the members listen to and then an interactive discussion is encouraged.

Social Services: Proactive efforts are put in Social Services to serve humanity in line with Islamic teachings and required expectations of *Majlis Ansarullah* plans.

Feeding the neighborhood: This program is being carried out by *Ansarullah* Dallas for the last many years in which a poor neighborhood is served once a month with free food prepared by *Ansar*. This program is executed by collaborating with the Non-Ahmadi Muslim Mosque, which also helps in developing cordial and brotherly relations with them and they are the only Non-Ahmadi Muslim organization which participates in our *Seerat-tu-Nabi* and interfaith meetings.

Meal on wheels: This Social service activity is being carried on for the last many years by coordinating with a church. This involves distribution of prepared food to needy citizens homes thrice a month by *Ansar*. Additionally *Ansar* are also involved in regular social services programs including donations of money and clothes, transporting needy brothers to the mosque, teaching children in secular as well as religious subjects.

Ta'lim: There are two tests , which *Ansar* are supposed to submit in the year. All the resource materials are identified and constant monitoring is done through emails and personal contacts to ensure that a major percentage of members take part. *Ta'lim* syllabus like the explanation about prescribed Ahadith and writings of Promised Messiah[as] are covered in our regular monthly meetings.

Tarbiyyat: Tarbiyyat topic in the form of prescribed Friday sermon of Hazoor is presented in every monthly meeting and discussion is encouraged. *Tarbiyyat* week is organized in accordance with the plan and desired *Tarbiyyat* activities are reminded to the members to follow.

Helping Inactive Members: One of the most important objectives of *Majlis Ansarullah* is, the moral training of all its members. There are some members who may not be as active in their religious obligations as others. It is therefore, crucial that we have to explore all the options to bring them closer to the rest in discharging their responsibilities. Inactive members are contacted consistently by talking to them or going to their homes and resolving any issues they may have which keep them away from the mosque. All the inactive members are personally contacted by *Zaeem* before every meeting and encouraged to attend the meeting.

Monthly Meetings: Main forum for the moral training of the members are the monthly meetings. Therefore, it is ensured that they are held every first Sunday of every month and the entire prescribed agenda is followed in these meetings. The agenda covers all the aspects of our requirements like, correct recitation of Holy Qur'an, its translation and commentary, *Dars-e-Hadith*, commentary on selected writings of Promised Messiah[as], Tarbiyyat discussion, *Tabligh* and health topic.

Punctuality: Punctuality is one very important virtue which has to be adopted to be successful not only in secular life, but in religious affairs as well. It is, therefore, ensured that all our *Amila* as well as monthly meetings start at the given time and conclude accordingly in accordance with the time allocated for each presentation of the given agenda.

Annual Ijtema: Annual *Ijtema* is organized with all its requirements to include educational and sports competitions to satiate the needs of all the members. To make it successful, all the *Amila* members are motivated to encourage other members for attendance and active participation. 'Son to father' workshop has also become a regular feature of *Ijtema* and the members take keen interest in discussions to make it more interesting and objective oriented.

STORY OF A CONVERT TO AHMADIYYAT

Syeda Sana K. Shah

I was born a Sunni Muslim, but little did I know that at the tender age of 19 I would become part of the fastest growing Muslim community in the world. I didn't know much about the different sects that were in Islam, all I was raised to know was the "Sunni way." Growing up we would regularly attend the mosque for *Jumu'ah*, me, my brothers and sister would attend Qur'an classes on the weekends. When I was 17 I had gotten admission into college where I was introduced to a diverse group of religious faiths. I was amazed at how open minded the people were. The way I was raised was that I should only associate myself with other Muslims, but experiencing the unity that was conveyed my first day sparked an interest in my young curious mind. As the semester went on I had joined a group for all Muslim students. There I was introduced to an eclectic group of Muslims of different sects. I had already known about *Shi'ahs* but that day I was introduced to Ahmadiyyat. When I got home that night I had posed the question to my parents asking them about Ahmadiyyat, who are they? What are their beliefs? And why hadn't I heard of this specific sect before. My father was born and raised in Pakistan and my mother was born in Afghanistan but raised in Pakistan. Coming from Pakistan they had already had a major misconception about Ahmadiyyat. My mother responded and told me that there are many sects and that this was just one of them. My father on the other hand was very strict and quick to respond negatively. He forbade me to ask questions about Ahmadiyyat and told me that Ahmadis' are not Muslim. He told me never to mention the name again and to disassociate myself from anyone who was an Ahmadi. Being 17 and hearing the hatred and prejudice coming from my father made me wonder why everyone was so against Ahmadiyyat, what was so wrong with calling an Ahmadi a Muslim? It really bothered me that I didn't get a proper response about Ahmadiyyat from my parents but it inspired me to do some research on my own. Every day and every chance I had I would read about Ahmadiyyat online. I would read both the positive and negative things people had to say. The more I read the more I was noticing the similar struggles that the Muslims of the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] and Ahmadis' had to face. Both were persecuted mercilessly and were shunned from their communities only because they were following the word of Allah[swt]. The more I read about Hadhart Mirza Ghulam Ahmed[as] the more I felt in love with the love he had for the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]. How can anyone claim that this noble and pious man does not follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet[saw], when in fact he is the perfect example of how a Muslim should be. After studying Ahmadiyyat, the life and writings of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian[as], and praying for Divine guidance, it became evident to me that Ahmadiyyat is indeed the true Islam and that Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian[as] is that same Messiah and Imam Mahdi prophesied by the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]. By the Grace of Almighty Allah, I have seen many powerful and faith increasing dreams, which I believe were shown to me by Allah the Almighty. I have met the Holy Prophet[saw] twice in my dreams, once as a young man who received my embrace, and another time appearing middle aged at the end of a long corridor, and I have also met the Promised Messiah[as] in another dream who was inside a tent in the middle of a desert at night and gifted me with a gorgeous green head scarf from under his bed of straw. I also met our elegant Hazoor in another one of my dreams where Hazoor gifted me with a white head scarf and received me with a daughter-like embrace. These inspiring dreams are direct proof that Ahmadiyyat is the true Islam. I had so longed to see the Holy Prophet[saw] in my dreams and the fact that I seen him in my dream after accepting Ahmadiyyat just increased my faith and confirmed my decision. By the Grace of Allah[swt], I became inspired to join the holy Community of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as] and signed my *Bai'at* forms in 2009 at the age of 19, at Baitul Aman Mosque in Connecticut, *Alhamdulillah*! Even though, my parents do not support me and want nothing to do with me, the Connecticut

Jama'at has shown me love, respect and welcomed me with open arms. Every time I attend the mosque I had felt a sense of wholeness that I was searching for. I was not afraid or sad to leave my family because every member from my *Jama'at* made me feel like I was not alone. I love and respect my parents and do not want to disobey them, but I will not turn my back on Ahmadiyyat which I know is the true Islam and no one can convince me otherwise. Finally my life was moving forward and in the right direction. Ever since I had accepted Ahmadiyyat, I feel I am receiving direct blessings from Allah^{swt} both religiously and secularly. Being an Ahmadi convert, I encounter opposition for my beliefs from my very own family and friends. It is very difficult for me to live in a home surrounded by people whom I love but who do not accept the message. Some family members try to set me back, but I feel much remorse for them, for they do not know where their salvation lies. To all my sisters, if you encounter similar difficulties, try and resist their efforts to entice you back to your former habits. Suffering and trials strengthen spiritual progress. Even if you make mistakes, keep praying for guidance because Allah is most Forgiving, Ever Merciful and Acceptor of Repentance. I would like to end with a verse from the holy Qur'an which states:

"Verily, you (O Muhammad) guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills" [al-Qasas,28:56]

And Allah had guided this Sunni Muslim woman to the true Islam, I am 22, and I am proud to say I am an Ahmadi Muslim.

AHMADIYYA TALENT AWARD

Students and professionals with outstanding achievements are invited to apply for the Ahmadiyya talent Award. Application deadline is May 1, 2011. Applications are on the *Jama'at* website under talim {www.ahmadiyya.us}. Please contact us at;

scholarship_committee@yahoo.com for further info.

FINANCIAL EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

[Including Talent- based scholarship, need-based educational loan]

A limited number of scholarships/loans are available to support college education for Ahmadi students of US. The application is available on www.ahmadiyya.us under taleem. Kindly send the completed application for educational assistance through the local President or Regional Missionary, along with the required documents to:

Secretary Scholarship Committee, Bait-ur-Rahman, 15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Springs, MD 20905.

All inquiries are to be directed via email to:
scholarship_committee@yahoo.com

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HELP JAPAN EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

THROUGH

HUMANITY FIRST

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INTERFAITH SYMPOSIUM

Sardar Rafiq Ahmad, General Secretary

The symposium was held at: The Ramada, Geneva New York on January 23, 2011

Speakers: One speaker from each faith was selected & approved: Dr. Ashok Shah (Hinduism), Rabbi David Reiner (Judaism), Chaplain Mark Henson (Christianity), Naseem Mahdi Sahib (Islam), Sardar Perminder Singh Soch (Sikhism)

Presided By: Judge Dennis Bender, Seneca County Church

Topic: Sanctity of Holy Scriptures

Media Contacts: All of three Rochester/Syracuse TV stations, The Finger Lakes Times of Geneva NY, Hometown Review Newspaper (local) & 10 Radio Stations were contacted and were invited by sending the flier. From the Center, press releases were also sent to all of the above agencies.

Media Result: WGVA 1240 took a 10 minutes interview from Naseem Mahdi Sahib which was aired on 3 other stations also. (Via phone lines), The Finger Lakes Times also took Mahdi Sahib's interview and published in the Friday issue (Jan. 21 2011), The Hometown Review printed a brief report of the event, a couple of days latter. All coverage clearly removed the misconception of Jihad, Terrorism and Loyalty. Also, they represented a beautiful picture of Islam and Ahmadiyyat.

The Event: The reception tables were set along with the literature. The hall was nicely set for over 150 people along with refreshment tables and power point set up and audio/video set up.

Special Audience: Some special people came, not to mention a few business owners.

Chaplain Leslie Adams from Hobart William Smith Colleges Geneva
Rev. David Mihalyi of St Paul Episcopal Church Waterloo NY
Rev. Donald A. Golden, of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, Geneva NY
Glen Silver, Secretary of Concerned Citizens of Seneca County, along with the President and some members.
Rick Coe, Owner of Coe-Genung Funeral Home Waterloo NY
Professor Salahud Din Kafarvi, Islamic Studies Professor @ Hobart & William Smith Colleges, Geneva NY
Some students from Hobart College and seven Jews brought by the Rabbi

Presentation: After welcome by Mubarak Bashir Sahib, the Secretary invited all of the speakers to the stage and then asked Judge Bender to preside over the function. The seminar started with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Imam Zafar Sarwar Sahib followed by the translation. The speakers presented their view point from their faiths. They tried to highlight the commonalities of the faiths. Hindu and Sikh speakers spoke a lot about the common themes between them and Islam. In regard to respect of their scriptures, the Rabbi said that if it drops on the Ground by mistake, we observe fast for 40 days. He also mentioned, we follow some of its teachings while other teaching we modify. The Christian speaker spoke in the traditional way while the Hindu speaker tried his best to bring about the commonalities between faiths. Naseem Mahdi Sahib

the references from the Holy Qur'an, the meaning and true views of Islam about terrorism and Jihad. While stressing the respect of the Holy Qur'an, he mentioned that its authenticity proves itself and its accuracy as the word of God. Even Christian scholars acknowledge that. He narrated quotes from the traditions of the Holy Prophet[saw] about the sanctity of life and of the mosque which is the house of God. In answering a number of questions he explained a Muslim's belief about loyalty to his country. When people listened to Islam's views about terrorism and loyalty and peace, the audience applauded again and again. People were so interested that the Q/A session had to be extended for another half an hour. At the end, President Naseer Tahir Sahib thanked the audience, the speakers and the Ramada Hotel employees for their role in the success of the function. He then presented a gift to all of the speakers, a gift of books containing the Holy Qur'an, The Philosophy of Teachings of Islam and "Muslims for Peace" pamphlet. Finally, Judge Bender gave his remarks about the importance of the function and its success.

Conclusion: The symposium ended at 4:30pm. The total attendance was 92. After the function, Naseem Mahdi Sahib had a dinner with Judge Dennis Bender at a local Ahmadi's residence. The dinner was also attended by the President and Mubarak Bashir along with their wives and Daud Munawar Sahib.

Organizing Team: Although the whole *Jama'at* played an important role in the arrangement of the function, but the following members deserve special mention: Imam Zafar Sarwar, Dr. Naseer Tahir, Mubarak Bashir, Salman Akbar, Bilal and Haaris Malak, Muzaffar Tanwir, Amatul Musawar, Anees Ahmad, Busaina Ahmad and Firaz Khokhar Sahib's son.

Public's Comments:

"Very well organized function, congratulations". Rev. David Mihalyi
"Very knowledgeable". Rick Coe
"I heard it was a very successful function and people learned a lot from this." A local resident who could not attend.
"Congratulations on the success of the function, now you should do this in my own Synagogue also" Cantor Rosenfield

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AN INTERFAITH EVENT

Mirza Mahmood Ahmad,
Tabligh Secretary, Columbus, OH Jama'at

An Interfaith Event was held on March 13, 2011 in a Public Library. The Police Chief of the Madison Township, who was the Chief Guest presided over the meeting. He was presented the Holy Qur'an and some other books about Islam by the *Jama'at*. Pastor Dr. Kevin Orr and Dr. Abdus Salam Malik, President of the Columbus, OH *Jama'at* spoke at the event. The topic of the symposium was, 'The Concept of Salvation'. An introduction of the Ahmadiyya Community was given by Mr. Naseer Waseem. The Program was well received and appreciated by all the attendees. We are thankful to Pastor Dr. Kevin Orr who helped to organize the event.

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WAQFE NAU PROGRAM AT 2010 WEST COAST JALSA SALANA USA

Hammad Malik

During the 2010 West Coast *Jalsa Salana* a *Waqfe Nau* class was held on Friday with National Secretary *Waqfe Nau*, USA, Hafiz Samiullah Chaudhary Sahib, and Nai'b Ameer, Dr. Hamidur Rehman Sahib. In attendance there were 60 boys and girls along with their parents.

The program started at 7:30 PM with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an and a poem by *Waqifeene Nau*. The opening remarks were delivered by Hafiz Samiullah Chaudhary Sahib followed by speeches and presentations by *Waqifeene Nau*. The first speech was given by Tariq Naseem Ahmad, a *Waqfe Nau* from the Los Angeles East *Jama'at* who is currently attending the *Jamia Ahmadiyya* North America. He shared his first year's experience and overcoming of the perceived challenges about *Jamia*. He also described his daily learning routine and a format of his time management. Then, some young Nasiraat on the ladies' side presented a beautifully recited poem. The poem was followed by a speech on how to be a role model by Jalees Dar. Jalees presented references from the Holy Qur'an, sayings of the Holy Prophet[saw], writings of Hadhrat Promised Messiah[as] and from the *Khulafae of* Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as].

Hafiz Samiullah Chaudhary Sahib gave a detailed talk on what it means to be a *Waqfe Nau*, especially in the light of the Friday Sermon by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] on the subject of dedication. He encouraged all the *Waqfeene Nau* to seek help when facing any problems and to utilize the *Jama`at's* resources in order to find solutions. Hafiz Sahib emphasized about bringing out any sort of challenges so all can help in battling the issues. The program was concluded with closing remarks by Na'ib Ameer, Dr. Hamidur Rehman Sahib and silent prayers.

There was a group photo taken at the end of the program and awards were distributed in recognitions of the completion of first recitation of the Holy Qur'an and special participation gifts were handed out. *Waqfe Nau* caps were given to boys and scarves were distributed to all the *Waqfate Nau*. A healthy quantity of chocolates was also given to everyone including the parents.

MEETING WITH LOCAL WAQFE NAU SECRETARIES

On Saturday, National Secretary Sahib held a lunch meeting with all the Local *Waqfe Nau* secretaries along with the two regional *Waqfe Nau* secretaries from the West Coast regions. This meeting aimed at getting everyone on board with respect to the National *Waqfe Nau* program. Hafiz Sahib also talked about the syllabus for all the *Waqfeene Nau*, upcoming testing of 18+ age group and miscellaneous updates. Hafiz Sahib distributed a handout outlining gthe responsibilities of local *Waqfe Nau* Secretaries. Another handout was provided to everyone with all the details including a National Calendar of events for 2011. Hafiz Sahib gave the guidelines on how to teach the syllabus and prepare the *Waqifeene Nau* for tests. He also encouraged the secretaries that they may join in to listen to the monthly conference calls on a regular basis.
The meeting concluded with *Dua*.

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Mohammed Hameedullah

My younger bother, Mohammed Hameedullah Sahib was born on January 31st, 1941, and passed away on March 3rd 2011 from a Silent Myocardial Infarction.

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُوْنَ

He was the oldest son of Mr. Mohammed Abdullah of Hyderabad Deccan (AKA Abdullah BSC). He left behind 4 daughters and 1 son. Two of his daughters are in the *Waqfe Nau* Scheme and both are very young, one is still an infant. He had a very high regard for the *Darveshan-e-Qadian* and spent considerable time in Qadian. His first marriage was to the daughter of *Darwesh Marhoom* Choudhry Faiz Ahmed Gujrati Sahib. He had two daughters and one son from his first marriage. He later remarried and had two more daughters, whom he leaves behind with his widow. *Allah Ta'ala* guided him to donate money to Widows and *Yatama,* during his last days he gave in fervor.

He was an ardent follower of *Khilafat* and a zealous *Da'i ilallah.* He served as Secretary Tabligh for the Chicago *Jama'at* (when it was one *Jama'at*) and by the Grace and Mercy of Allah converted a great many to Ahmadiyyat. He was among a few members who daringly distributed our *Jama'at* literature when the Pope visited Bombay in 1964. He was never timid nor bashful when it came to *Tabligh* and used to be passionate and thirsty for preaching Ahmadiyyat. Even though he had a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry he did not pursue it further. Instead, he drove a taxi and used that opportunity to come into contact with people to preach and pass on the message of Islam and Ahmadiyyat to all of his passengers, and did it very effectively.

As a brother he was very compassionate and helped his whole family in some way or other. His brothers and sisters loved his compassion and his caring attitude. In 2002 he lost his eyesight due to diabetes and since then became passive and converted all his attention to prayers and supplication. May Allah raise his status in heaven and may Allah provide immensely to his progeny – *Ameen.*

Zafar Basith

My father was a devoted father to me, who invested everything he could in order to ensure my personal success and happiness, from giving expansive advice on all topics to stressing the value of education and continued learning. He taught me to think, apply prudent judgment, heed the sound advice of others, provide counsel to them as best I could and most of all to continue to seek to better myself throughout life. He instilled in me a desire to be an active and informed citizen of Chicago and the United States of America, and to contribute to society to the full extent of my abilities. Of course, he also stressed the importance of being a valuable member of *Jama'at-e-Ahmadiyya.* My father set a personal example by his active involvement in Chicago *Jama'at,* including, though not limited to, his time as Secretary *Tabligh.* He made sure I included all visitors and converts in social activities and conversation, and that no one was ignored based on race, ethnicity or simple unfamiliarity. His thirty years as a part of the Chicago *Jama'at* have left pleasant memories among scores of people. He is remembered fondly by those who are still here as well as those who have moved on to other locales. I deeply appreciate the calls and emails of all of the many people who have shared with me their memories of my father. Please continue to remember him in your prayers.

Basharat A. Hameedullah

The late Hameedullah Sahib was a very devoted Ahmadi. He served as a *Tabligh* Secretary. He always used his free time preaching people. I will mention one incident. Once, he borrowed '*Tafseer-e-Saghir*' from me while he was driving cab so he could read it during the waiting time at the airport. It was his daily practice to read *Jama'at* books. One day he called me and started crying like a baby. I ask him, "Why are you crying so much and uncontrollably?" I thought probably he has gotten some bad news from his home here or from back-home. He was unable to talk to me at least for few minutes. When he got some control over himself he told me, "I have a very bad news for you. I have lost your '*Tafseer-e-Saghir*'. I loved that book so much that I feel as if somebody close to my family has passed away." Moreover, I witnessed that he had an extraordinary love for the *Jama'at* and *Khilafat.* He was a *Moosi* since his early age. May Allah elevate his status in the heaven. *Ameen*

Mir Ahmed Afzal

MUSLIMS FOR PEACE BOOKSTALL By Tucson Jama'at

Haroon Amin, Gen. Sec. Tucson Jama'at, and Jonathan M.A. Ghaffar, Asst. Sec. Tabligh, L.A. East Jama'at

The Muslims For Peace bookstall by the Tucson *Jama'at* was a great success. March 12th and 13th 2011 marked the Tucson AMC *Jama'at's* first ever participation in the University of Arizona-feted "Tucson Festival of Books." The two-day event drew an estimated 70,000 Tucsonians. And judging from the approximately 1,200 combined "Muslims for Peace" and "Muslims for Loyalty" flyers handed out to passersby and visitors to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's "Muslims For Peace"-themed book stall, the *Tabligh* and information booth was a resounding success.

A healthy contingent of *Khuddam* and *Ansar* manned the booth over the weekend, which was in operation from 9:30am until 5:30 pm. More than 500 people came up to the tables filled with Holy Qur'ans, *Jama'at* books and free literature to ask questions, give their support, receive more free literature or buy Holy Qur'ans and books on Islam and Ahmadiyyat. Only one or two people expressed negative or hostile opinions about Islam.

Overall, *Al-Hamdulillah*, the goals of spreading the true, peaceful message of Islam Ahmadiyya and providing positive exposure for the Muslims who believe in the Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as], were admirably met. Noted *Jama'at* author Arif Humayun was also on hand to promote his new book on understanding and combating radicalism in Islam titled "Connivance by Silence" which was penned in answer to and following the May 28th 2010 attacks on two Ahmadi mosques in Lahore which killed 86 and wounded hundreds more.

Tucson *Jama'at* president Muhammad Akram Kashmiri promised that he and other interested *Da'een* would return to participate in next year's Tucson Festival of Books with hopes of even better results and attendance by both visitors and *Jama'at* members. And despite being the Tucson *Jama'at's* first outing at the Book Festival, all volunteers acquitted themselves with dedication, decorum and zeal. They engaged in stimulating conversations and garnered valuable *Tabligh* experience at the event. Numerous contacts were also made with local residents interested in furthering their understanding of Islam and Ahmadiyyat by attending any future *Jama'at* events or arranging for a free tour and Q&A discussion at the Tucson Ahmadiyya Mosque.

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TABLIGH ACTIVITY

Mirza Mahmood Ahmad Tabligh Secretary Columbus, OH Jama'at

Last Friday Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] drew our attention to make contacts with the Japanese and tell them about the advent of the Promised Messiah[as] Last Sunday, the Japanese had a big gathering in Columbus, OH and invited all for condolences etc. Five members of our *Jama'at* went there, to represent the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. This humble one addressed more than 200 hundred Japanese and said a few words as condolence and prayed for those who are suffering and informed that our community helped at the time of Kobe earthquake and even at this time, we are there on the ground helping the sufferings in different ways through Humanity First. We met the Mayor of the city of Dublin, OH in the Japanese Chapel, where the meeting was held. Many Japanese met after the meeting and they exchanged the information. *Insha Allah* we will do our best to keep in touch with them to do our best. We did not see any Muslim or any Muslim Organization's representative there. Please keep us in your prayers. A brief report of the *Tabligh* activity was sent to Hazoor[aba].

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PAY ZAKAT

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Registration Form for AMMA Retreat

May 27th to 29th. 2011 (Friday, Saturday & Sunday)
Holiday Inn Washington Dulles
45425 Holiday Drive
Dulles, VA 20166
www.hidullesairport.com
(703) 480-7411

Name: _____ Tel. No. ( )

Date and time of arrival: _____How many people in your party? _____

For help please call 615-390-6775 Registration = $500

Payment included: _____ Make checks payable to AMI.

Please send your payments and registration form to the following address:
Dr. Naeem Lughmani
3104 Stiles Way
West Friendship, MD 21794

Registration is also available on line at www.ammausa.org. All credit cards are accepted.

Registration includes

1) Friday and Saturday night stay in Holiday Inn
2) All meals; (Dinner on Friday and Saturday
   Lunch on Saturday
   Breakfast on Saturday and Sunday)
3) Visit to Capitol Building in DC
4) Ride to and from National Air and Space Museum

❁ Hotel has a complimentary shuttle service from the Dulles Airport.
❁ A limited number of rooms have been reserved in the hotel. Rooms will be allotted on first come first served basis.
❁ Each room has two double beds. If you need more than one room, please add $150 to your registration fee for each additional room.
❁ On Saturday morning a coach will take women and children to the National Mall for a visit of the Capitol Building. This visit is included in the registration fee.
❁ National Air and Space museum is located three miles from the hotel. The entry to the museum is free. The rides inside the museum and the 3D-IMAX have separate charge which is not included in the registration.
❁ Please note if you are not planning to stay overnight in the hotel, you will still have to register to participate in any part of the program. There is no discount in the registration fee.